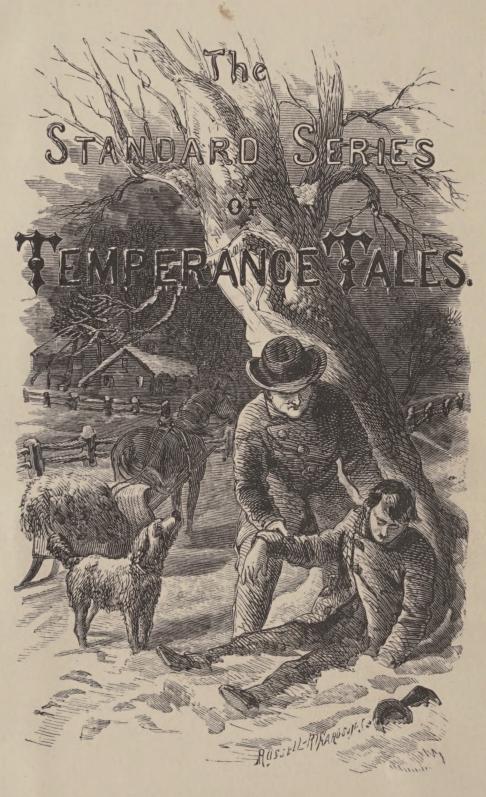
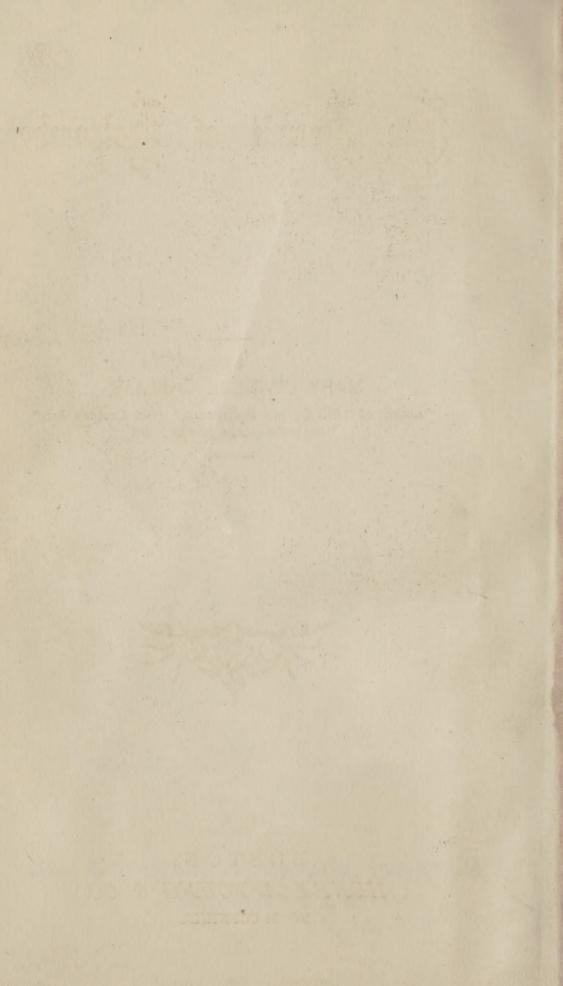


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The Hermit of Holcombe.

BY

MARY DWINELL CHELLIS,

"Author of "Bill Drock's Investment," "Old Doctor's Son,"
"Mark Dunning's Enemy," &c.





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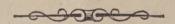
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The Permit of Polcombe.



CHAPTER I.

Fill high the glass with ruby wine,
And shout the praises of the vine;
Drink, till forgotten care and ill,
Drink, till each pulse shall feel the thrill;
But know, for this, stern judgments wait,
And he who drinks must bide his fate.

OOK, Hal! Rip Van Winkle must have fallen asleep, for the second time, among these hills; and just waked up. See! There he comes, down the street."

"Rip Van Winkle, indeed," was the reply.

"Only he lacks the ruddy face and stout

figure of a Dutchman. Here, Crombie, who is that coming down the street?"

"Mr. Wolcott, the hermit, as he is called. He must be out on special business, or he wouldn't be dressed in that style. Haven't you seen him, before? I forgot, though, you are new comers. Mr. Wolcott is one of the institutions of Holcombe. An old school gentleman, but a little flighty;" and the speaker touched his forehead, as he said this. "He is looking his best to-day; probably going to the bank, for his monthly allowance. It is after hours, but they always accommodate him. He must have spent too much time in polishing his buckles;" all which only served to stimulate the curiosity of Warren Lewis and Harry Manson.

A coat of ancient fashion, short breeches and long stockings, knee-buckles and buckled shoes would have made Mr. Wolcott a conspicuous figure, without the military hat, which was the crowning glory of his wardrobe. Tall and stately, although age had
set its seal upon him, he walked slowly
down the street, bowing ceremoniously to all
whom he met.

"He must have learned his manners in good society," remarked Warren Lewis. "Did you see how polite he was to that old woman? We must ask Aunt Ellen about him. I thought I had seen all the wonders of Holcombe, long ago!"

"How long?" was asked in reply, as the two young students passed through an open gate, to a large old-fashioned house, over which Aunt Ellen presided. She was standing on the piazza, looking weary and sad, yet smiling, as they approached.

"Is Ellis suffering much this afternoon?" asked Harry, forgetting, for the moment, Mr. Wolcott, and his quaint dress.

"Yes, he has suffered very much," an-

swered the lady. "He has been wishing he could go out under the trees; and it does seem hard that he must be denied all boyish sports."

"It is too bad," said Warren Lewis.

"And he could be such a splendid scholar,
too. One of the fellows told me he'd begun
to study Latin with Uncle Paul."

"Yes, he had; and sometimes he studies it for a little while, now, when he feels like applying himself. He has been more restless than usual, to-day. I hoped your uncle would come home early."

"You are very tired, Aunt Ellen."

"I believe I am, and a little dispirited," was the reply."

Mrs. Farley was more than a little dispirited. Her boy, upon whom she doted, and for whom she had dreamed of a future, bright only as may be, in a mother's dream, was to be a cripple. For hours, he would

lie, with his head thrown back, unnaturally, and his thin lips quivering with pain. That day the hours had seemed longer, and the pain harder to bear than usual. He grew restless; fretting at confinement, and longing for change.

"If father would only come. Do see if he is coming, mother," he said; and it was for this Mrs. Farley had gone out upon the piazza.

"Uncle will be late to-night," remarked Harry Manson. "Some gentlemen called just before the close of the last recitation. Don't you think Ellis would let me bring him out of doors? I am very strong, and I am used to carrying my sister. She says I carry her better than father. Please, when I come down stairs, you come out of the room, and I think I can coax him to let me try."

"I wish you could, Harry. It would be

such a relief; but if he should consent, you may, sometime, find your kindness over-tasked. I used to carry Ellis, myself, until your uncle and the doctor forbade it."

Harry went to his room, and returned, presently, looking so fresh and strong, that the very sight of him was a tonic. He wore a dressing-gown which Ellis particularly admired, and an embroidered velvet cap which his invalid sister, Sadie, had given him the day before he left home. "Will I do?" he asked, as he passed his aunt in the hall, and the next moment he was standing by Ellis.

"Oh, dear! I hoped it was father," said the boy. I want to go out of doors."

"Can't you ride in your carriage?"

"No; I'd rather lie here," he answered, impatiently. "It hurts me to ride, and it never was half so good as riding in father's arms. How nice you look," he added,

seeming for the first time to observe his cousin's appearance. "I'm cross to-day, cousin Harry, and I know it's wicked; but it seems as though I couldn't help it;" and two large tears rolled down the pale cheeks.

"I don't wonder you feel so," was the kind reply. "You are tired of staying in the house. Sadie gets tired very often, and then I carry her in my arms till she gets rested."

"But I thought cousin Sadie was a young lady; and you are only a large boy."

"A pretty large boy," replied Harry, laughing. "I am nearly as tall as your father, and Sadie is a very small young lady. So it is easy for me to carry her."

"Is she as heavy as I am?"

"I presume she is. She is five years older than you. Let me lift you, and see which is the heavier."

- "But won't you hurt me, cousin Harry? Everybody does, except father and mother."
- "I don't think I shall hurt you, Ellis;" and the young man bent over the couch, upon which rested his cousin. "Put your arms around my neck. There, now did I hurt you?"
- "Not a bit," was the joyous answer. "I guess you've learned how. You didn't pull me any where."
- "I guess I have learned. I have carried Sadie a good many miles in my arms. Now, where would you like to go?"
 - "Under the trees. I want"-
- "Well, what do you want? Just imagine that I am a good fairy, able to grant anything you desire."
- "I want to go down to the pond; but it's too far for you to carry such a heavy boy."
- "We'll see about that. We can take it easily."

All this time, Harry had been pacing the room with a slow, measured tread, soothing by its very uniformity. "Now, do you think you will trust me to carry you out of doors?" he asked.

"I guess I will, cousin. I feel better, already, and I am going to love you, ever so much. I didn't want to have you and cousin Warren come here. Did you know it?"

"How should I?" was the evasive reply.
"Why didn't you wish to have us come?"

"I'm ashamed to tell; but I will, though, because mother says we feel better, when we confess we've done wrong. I was afraid father and mother wouldn't think so much of me, after you come. I was foolish and naughty; but I shan't do so again.

"I guess you won't, Ellis. Suppose we go and find your mother. Here we are, Aunt Ellen; two boys walking on one pair of feet; and if you will walk with us, we shall have no trouble."

"Oh, mother!" cried the lame boy.

"Cousin Harry carries me every bit as well as father does. He learned how, carrying Sadie. Good afternoon, cousin Warren."

"Good afternoon," answered the young man. "You are really getting up in the world. I must take lessons of Hal, so I can carry you myself. He is considered a wonderful nurse at Uncle Manson's. Sadie says he never gets tired."

"Aren't you getting tired?" asked Ellis, when they had been out of doors a short time.

"Not at all," was the reply. "You are not so heavy as Sadie. We must go to the pond, now we are so near. Are you comfortable?"

"Yes, indeed;" and a pair of wasted arms were twined more closely around the good cousin's neck.

By the pond there were some rustic benches, and here, the whole party were resting, when Professor Farley found them.

"As the house was deserted, I came in search of the inmates," he said. "I could not avoid being late, although I supposed Ellis would be impatient to see me. But I see that he has transferred his allegiance to Harry."

"I was impatient to see you, father, and I am ever so glad to see you, now," responded Ellis, from his new resting place. "But isn't cousin Harry real good, to carry me?"

"Very good, and I am very much obliged. But I will relieve you now, Harry."

"Not unless Ellis prefers that you should. It seems like home, to have some one in my arms, and I am not so tired as you."

Ellis did not care to change, and the Professor had the privilege of resting. "I saw a friend of yours, as I was coming home," he remarked to his wife. "Mr. Wolcott is out, in court dress, and he enquired for my lady, with as much gallantry as could any Knight of the olden time. I invited him to take tea with us; but he thought his business would detain him until too late. He may come, however, and perhaps we had better return to the house. The young gentlemen can stay here, longer, if they choose."

"I want to see Mr. Wolcott, if he comes," said Ellis, quickly.

"That must be the man we saw when we were coming home," remarked Warren Lewis. "Crombie said his name was Wolcott. He is, certainly, a striking looking person."

"A wreck of a noble man," was the response. "An old man, too, although he stands erect as most of our young men."

"But how came he to be as he is, now?" asked Harry.

"It is a long story, in its details," answered the Professor. "Failure in business, woman's treachery, and intoxicating drink, have wrought his ruin. I will give you his history, sometime."

"There he is, coming now," exclaimed Ellis; and truly there was the very man, of whom they were speaking. He had accomplished his business before seeing Professor Farley; but it was his way to talk of pressing engagements, and urgent business.

"I hope I am not intruding," he said, removing his hat, and bowing so low to Mrs. Farley that his lips nearly met her extended hand. "The Professor invited me to his house, and I anticipated so much pleasure in coming, that I postponed my business."

"And we are very glad to see you, only

sorry we were not in the house to welcome you," was the reply of his host. "Mr. Wolcott, these are our nephews, Warren Lewis, and Harry Manson, who have come to study under my tuition."

"Very happy to see you, young gentlemen," was the response, as the speaker bowed with flattering deference. "You could not find a wiser teacher, or a more delightful home."

It was then Ellis' turn to be noticed, and he had no reason to complain of neglect. The odd visitor complimented, pitied, and amused him, in such strange fashion, that he could hardly restrain a hearty laugh.

"I am very glad to see you," said the boy, frankly. "I haven't been very happy, to-day, until cousin Harry brought me out here."

[&]quot;Why not happy?" was asked.

[&]quot;Because I couldn't get up and walk,

just where I wanted to. If I could only walk and run like other boys, I should be happy."

"You see, Ellis makes the same mistake as many grown people. He thinks his own troubles the severest of any," remarked the Professor; and then added, before a reply could be made, "Perhaps we had better go to the house. I am sure my wife is thinking of tea."

"Are you ready to go, Ellis?" asked his cousin.

"Yes; but would you rather have father carry me?"

"No. When I am tired, I will find a way to dispose of you," was the reply. "Warren, you can walk on as fast as you please. We propose to be slow and stately."

Tea was served in Mrs. Farley's best style, and her guest adapted himself to his surroundings with ease and grace. He talked upon various subjects, intelligently and well. Occasionally, there would be a slight hesitation, or short pause; but beyond this, there was nothing to indicate a diseased brain.

Ellis, bolstered up in a large chair, which had been constructed expressly for him, enjoyed the entertainment so much, that he forgot his helplessness. "Isn't he the funniest man, father?" was the exclamation, so soon as the family were left by themselves.

"He is very strange," was the reply. "I have rarely seen him appear so well as he has this evening. He must have been on short allowance for liquor, lately. To-morrow he will probably be intoxicated."

"What! That man get intoxicated!" exclaimed Harry Manson.

"Certainly. Does it seem strange to you?"

"Yes, sir. He is such a fine scholar, and so intelligent; how can he stoop to intoxication?"

"In the same way which others do. But it is a terrible desecration in his case. He is a graduate of old Harvard, and was one of the most promising young merchants of Now, he lives in a tumble-down cottage, half a mile from any other house. To-day, he appears like a gentleman; tomorrow, he may be as beastly drunk as the most degraded sot in town. He has drawn his monthly allowance, and will have the means of gratifying his appetite." In reply to a questioning glance from his nephews, the Professor continued: - "He has wealthy relations who provide for him. He draws a sum, each month, more than sufficient to meet all necessary expenses; but I presume he sometimes suffers for the want of suitable food. I have seen him, myself, when he had been fasting.".

"He ate a lot of supper, to-night," said Ellis, whose whole attention had been absorbed in the conversation.

"We were glad to have him," responded Mrs. Farley, with a slight accent of reproof.

"Yes, mother; but I thought perhaps he had been fasting, as father said."

"Very likely, Ellis. He spends most of his money soon after he gets it, and then manages as he can."

"But can't he be made to do differently?" asked Warren Lewis. "It seems as though he might be influenced in some way."

"It does seem so, when you take an abstract view of such a case. But I know of only one way in which he could be influenced. If he was confined, where he could never act freely, he would not use intoxicating liquors. His friends have thought of this; but, on the whole, consider it best to leave him as he is. In one sense, he

has made a wreck of himself, and his course seems inexcusable; in another, he deserves sympathy rather than condemnation. When the firm, of which he was a member, failed in business, he lost everything, while his partner was enriched; and in less than a year this partner married the lady to whom Mr. Wolcott had been engaged for some time. This occurred forty years ago; and since then he has been a wretched, restless man. Most people consider him insane. I am not sure in regard to that; but it is certain that he lacks both faith in God, and a sense of his own responsibility. Had he possessed these, in the outset, hard as it might have been for him to bear the disappointment of all his hopes, he would have endeavored to do his duty, and thus found peace and contentment."

For a while no one made any response to this. Mrs. Farley, whose sympathies were strongly enlisted for the unfortunate man, could only have expressed her sympathy; while her nephews would have considered it boasting, to say what they really thought.

"He was a fool," at length said Warren Lewis. "No need of being a drunkard, because every thing don't go right. He couldn't have had a very strong mind, to begin with."

"You might say that in regard to every one who does wrong," replied his uncle, smiling, a little sadly, at the self-confidence thus expressed. "We all yield to temptation, when we ought to stand strong. I suppose you have seen instances of such weakness."

"Yes, sir, I have; and been myself an instance," answered Warren, with a blush. "But Mr. Wolcott's case is different. He has wasted his whole life. I shouldn't do that."

"I know you would not deliberately resolve to do that," was the reply. "And I much doubt if any one so resolves. It is giving way, inch by inch, which brings us into danger; and it is refusing to do the duties of each day which makes life a failure."

"But what if we can't do anything?" asked Ellis, looking at his father, with sad, earnest eyes.

"We can do something, my boy," was the quick, cheerful reply. "If nothing more, we can be patient and hopeful, even when suffering; and we can be grateful for all the blessings which God gives us. I suppose Mr. Wolcott thought he had nothing to live for, when he lost his money, and the woman he loved; but he might have had a happy life, for all that, if his heart had been right. Now, I have given quite a lecture, young gentlemen. I think it will be suf-

ficient for once, and my boy is getting tired. I can tell by the flush on his cheek. Don't you think we had better go to your room, Ellis?"

"Yes, sir, I am tired; but I want to ask you some questions about something I read in my new book, to-day. Perhaps I could have made it out myself, if I hadn't been so impatient. It has been one of my wicked days, but I mean to be better to-morrow."

Mr. Farley went out with his son, and Harry said,

"Do tell us more about Mr. Wolcott, Aunt Ellen. Who keeps his house for him?"

"He is his own housekeeper," was the reply. "The woman who lives in the nearest house cooks most of his food, and puts his house in order, whenever she has an opportunity. Sometimes, he asks her to do this; but generally, she sweeps and scrubs

when he is away. If he is in what he calls bad spirits, he fastens the house to prevent her getting in; so that, often, there is no cleaning done for weeks.

"Why don't his friends take him away, and oblige him to live decently?"

"They have wished to do so, but he prefers to stay here. When he first came into town, he boarded at the hotel, and did some writing. He posted books, and kept the bank accounts, until he drank so badly that he could not be trusted. Then his friends bought and furnished the house where he lives, and where he will probably die. He refuses to have any repairs made, and clings to every old garment as though far better than new. The suit he wore to-day, is kept carefully locked up in a large trunk, and his fancy for wearing it seems, to me, more like insanity than anything else I have observed in him. Perhaps you would like

to visit him some day. It is a pleasant walk to his house; and if you should find him sober, he would be very entertaining."

Not long after this, the two cousins decided to spend a half holiday in exploring the country, and visiting Mr. Wolcott; anticipating both pleasure and instruction. Through the village they walked rapidly, then, more slowly, pausing occasionally to catch a view of some distant mountain, or the gleaming of a tranquil lake.

"We must have come nearly two miles," at length said Harry. "Uncle said the hermit's house was a little back from the road, on the right hand side, and surrounded with old apple trees."

"Yes, all that," was the reply. "Another thing, he said we should see it from the top of a high hill. This one we are climbing is high enough for the site of an observatory. And look, there it is. The

roof covered with moss, and part of the windows boarded up. That must be the place. I wonder if we shall find the old gentleman at home."

The house was reached. They rapped loudly; but no one responded. Again they rapped, with no better success. They went to another door; but this, like the one they had already tried, was secured from within.

"He must be gone. I am tired enough, though, to rest, and may as well rest here as anywhere," said Harry, suiting the action to the word, as he seated himself upon a partly hewn log.

Warren proceeded to examine the outside of the dwelling they wished to enter; and after being lost sight of by his cousin, for a few minutes, returned to say, in a low tone, "Mr. Wolcott is at home, and I have seen him."

"Where?" was asked, quickly.

"On a bed. I looked through a crack in the shutter, and it's my opinion he's drunk. There's a jug in the chair beside the bed, and he looks like a drunken man. Come and see him."

"But what if he should see us? We can't get out of sight if he does; and it would be an awkward scrape to be caught."

"No danger of that. I tell you he's drunk. Come along and see for yourself."

They went to the backside of the house. and through an opening in the window shutter, saw the old man, clad in soiled and ragged garments, extended upon a bed, the covering of which was scarcely less soiled and ragged. The floor of the room was strewn with rubbish, and tracked with mud.

"Terrible!" exclaimed Harry, in a loud whisper. "I have a great mind to break open the door, and rouse him. He may die here alone. Perhaps he is dead already."

"No, he isn't dead. Hear him breathe;" and they stood there, listening eagerly, while he was unconscious of their presence. Time passed unheeded.

"I believe I will go in," said Harry.

"Better not do that," replied some one behind them. "I did not intend to listen," added the woman; for it was a woman who had spoken. "I've been on the lookout all day, to see if anything was stirring down here; and when I saw you come, I thought I'd come too. 'Twouldn't do the least good in the world, for you to stir him up. He'd only rave round and tear everything to pieces. I'm used to him, and know about how he'll act."

"But it don't seem right to leave him here in this condition, all alone," was urged in reply.

"I know it," answered the woman, moving away from the window. "I used to think

something might be done for him, but I've learned better. The last time his sister was here, she said he must live and die in this way. When he's dead drunk, he calls it forgetting his troubles, and says that's all the happiness he has. Are you acquainted with him?"

"We have seen him but once," was the reply. "He took tea at Uncle Farley's, last week."

"Oh, yes. And you are the young men he met there. That was the day he got his money. He hain't been sober, much, since then. He won't let me into the house, and that's the reason it's so dirty. Poor man! I pity him, but I can't help him."

"How long will he lie, as he is now?"

"I can't tell. When he comes to, enough to know anything, he'll drink as long as there's any liquor in the jug; and when

that's gone, he'll be pretty near crazy, for a day or two. Oh, it's a dreadful way to · live. I tell my boys I'd rather they'd die, than grow up to drink liquor. Young men think they can stop, when they're a mind to, but they find when they try, that liquor's got the upper hand. I don't suppose there's one in our academy any more promising than Mr. Wolcott was, when he was of their age. He's got all kinds of outlandish books, and was called a great scholar; but he's nothing but a poor, miserable drunkard, after all. There, do excuse me for running on so. Somehow, when I get to talking about that man, I don't know when to stop: and I've been a good deal anxious, this day or two. Seems to me he's got almost through."

By this time they had reached the road, where they separated; but Warren observed that, after standing, seemingly irresolute, for a time, the woman retraced her steps.

"If we haven't learned a lesson this afternoon, we must be dull scholars," remarked Harry Manson.

"I have learned a lesson," was the reply.

"What is it?"

"Not to give up for trifles. I've made up my mind what I want to do, in this world, and I calculate to persevere, let come what will. I'm going to be a wealthy merchant, and if I fail once, I'll try again, and keep trying, till I succeed. If any girl cares more for somebody else than she does for me, she'll be just welcome to go where she pleases, and no hearts broken, either. What lesson did you learn, Hal?"

"I learned that there is danger in moderate"—

"I know what you are going to say," interrupted Warren, impatiently. "I don't believe you've seen anything or anybody, for the last three months, without reading a temperance lecture. I'm not sure but you find lectures in stones, and running brooks."

"I do," was the response. "Running brooks are eloquent with the praises of water, and stones bear a dumb testimony to the grandeur of firmness. If I am to be a physician, I must be well taught. I don't mean, however, to make myself tiresome to you. I know we don't think alike about some things; but you can't deny that such sottish drunkenness as Mr. Wolcott's is terrible."

"I don't want to deny it, Hal. It seems as terrible to me, as it does to you; and I hope you'll excuse me for speaking hastily. I'm not half as good as you are, and everybody knows it. I have an abiding sense of your superiority."

"Why, cousin Warren."

"It's the truth, Hal. Do you suppose I've forgotten that you saved me from dis-

grace, last spring. You've saved me, too, from doing wrong a good many times, just because I should be ashamed to look you in the face, afterwards."

"And somebody else has saved me," was the cheerful reply. "Sadie has been my good angel. She is so sensitive and conscientious, I could never do anything to annoy or grieve her. I might have many bad habits, but for her. One who uses tobacco or liquor is never welcome to her, and I wouldn't lose her kisses, for all the jollifications in the world. It was the desire to relieve her sufferings, that made me think of studying medicines."

"You are half a doctor, now. Such a nurse! you'd receive a diploma from any hospital in the country. For my part, I don't see how you can like to stay with sick people. Sadie is the only invalid I can toleerate, except Ellis."

"I am glad you can tolerate them," responded Harry Manson, thinking how often Sadie had said, 'What should I do, if you were like Warren!' "I like to be with sick people, if I can do them good. I mean to talk with Mr. Wolcott about drinking, and if I can't persuade him to give it up, perhaps I shall learn something that will be of benefit to others. I want to be a physician for both minds and bodies."

"You are the strangest fellow, cousin Hal. Here you are, only seventeen years old, talking like an old man. I shouldn't wonder if you should go as a missionary to the Sandwich Islands. 'Twould be in keeping with some things I've known of you, and I've no doubt you'd win hearts for yourself, if not souls for Christ."

"Hush, Warren. You are touching sacred things with careless hands."

"May be I am, Hal; though I didn't think

of it. But, before you go, you must see me well settled in business. You know you're expected to keep me in the way I should go. If I was like Ellis!"

- "What if you were?"
- "I should wish to die."
- "Are you sure?" asked Harry, seriously.

 "Life is sweet."
- "Not if we can do nothing but suffer, and be a burden to others."
- "But Ellis is not a burden. Neither is Sadie. And they may do more good, in their weakness, than we, with our strength."
- "Either of them will do more good than I," was the response. "As for you, you are a model young man; while it is hoped that I shall catch something of your goodness, by reflection."

Not often was Warren Lewis in such mood; but while under its influence, nothing was too extravagant for him to say. Dowered richly, by nature, and wanting for nothing which money or friends could give, it seemed strange that, so young, he should have aught to regret, or those who loved him aught to fear. But, as he said, his cousin had once saved him from open disgrace, and often saved him from wrong doing, by the force of example. Mortified, whenever he thought of this, and impatient at the temperance lectures, which seemed to him to be preached in season and out of season, he expressed himself bitterly.

"I'm ashamed of myself, Hal," he exclaimed, after a short silence. The lesson you learned this afternoon. was plainly writ."

"It seemed so to me," was the reply.

"But let us talk of something else. We shall have letters from home this evening.

I, a long one from Sadie. I wish I had her in my arms this minute."

"How you do love that girl, Hal! Do you expect to love another?"

"May be. Yes, I hope so. I can't help it, if I see one as lovable."

Letters were found and read before the cousins entered their uncle's house. No sooner was their step heard in the hall, than Ellis called,

"Please come here, cousin Harry, and tell me all about Mr. Wolcott. You said you would."

"And I will, as soon as I have disposed of a quantity of dust for which I have no use," was the reply.

It was a sad story he told, interrupted by frequent ejaculations, and expressions of regret.

"Oh, mother, what makes God let him do so?" asked the invalid boy.

"I don't know, my child," she answered.

"He is not obliged to do so."

- "No, mother; but you say," -
- "Don't go to philosophizing," interrupted Harry, smiling. "Wait a while before you try to understand the mysteries of Providence. One thing we all know. We are never obliged to do wrong."
- "We know more than that," added Mr. Farley, joining the group. "We are always under obligations to do right, no matter how strong the temptation to sin."
- "But, uncle, do you believe Mr. Wolcott has moral strength to resist the temptation to drink liquor?"
- "I believe he had the moral strength, and could have it again, if he would seek it at God's hands. But it is a fearful thing to fight the battle of life with our natural powers weakened by indulgence in sin. It is easy for many to be temperate; but it would be like plucking out his right eye, for Mr. Wolcott to be so. Yet he must

pluck it out if he would escape an eternity of misery.

School duties and home pleasures occupied every day; but "the hermit" was not forgotten. Harry Manson still wished to visit him, and improved the first opportunity for so doing. Going alone, he encountered the old man, looking so pale and dejected that his heart was touched.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Wolcott," he said, politely. "How do you do, to-day?"

This salutation failing to elicit a reply, it was repeated.

"I'm wretched, young man," was hissed, rather than spoken. "Do you know what it is to be lashed by furies, and chained to the rock, where vultures feed upon your vitals? Do you know what this is?"

"I hope no one knows that," answered Harry.

"I know. Shall I tell you what it is

like?" and the speaker's eyes glared fear-fully.

"No, don't tell me that. Let us talk of pleasant things. Tell me how the sun shines, and the birds sing, and flowers blossom," was the soothing reply. "I have walked from the village to see you, this afternoon."

"What do you want of a wretch like me?"

"I came to learn wisdom," said Harry, going nearer to his strange companion. "Uncle Farley says you are a fine scholar. Professor Farley. You are acquainted with him," added the young man.

"Yes, yes, he is one of my friends, and I may have seen you," answered Mr. Wolcott, with a perplexed air.

"I am his nephew, Harry Manson, a student, and I saw you at his house."

"Yes, yes. Happy to see you;" and

there was a decided change in the manner of the speaker. "I had a bad night, last night, and my head isn't quite right yet. Excuse me for not recognizing you. I would invite you to my house, but Mrs. Scott is cleaning there. Please to be seated upon this flat stone. I hope your uncle's family are well as usual. The illness of their son is a great affliction; but they bear it cheerfully."

- "Yes, sir; and Ellis is very patient. It is a pleasure to be with him."
- "You were carrying him when I first saw you."
- "Yes, sir. I am accustomed to carry my sister, who is an invalid, so I have learned to be a very good nurse."
- "I was a good nurse once, myself. But you see I've forgotten all that. Yes, all that," was repeated sadly. "I suppose life looks bright to you, and you have some grand ambition."

"I have a purpose," replied Harry. I intend to study medicine, and be a good physician."

"Then tell men to let alone the accursed drink, that ruins both soul and body," exclaimed Mr. Wolcott, with startling energy. They say there is a hell, where lost spirits wail forever; but I tell you there is a hell, here, in my breast, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The speaker sprang up, threw his arms about wildly, and seemed in the frenzy of delirium.

"Sit down, sit down," said his young friend, gently. "Uncle sent you some new papers; he thought you might like to read. I'm afraid you're not feeling well, to-day."

"I'm in torment!" was the reply. "The devils filled my house last night, and to-day they fill me. And I'm burning up with them. Oh, for some brandy to quench this fiery thirst."

- "Let me bring you some water," said Harry.
- "Water! Give water to children, but give me brandy."
- "But it hurts you to drink brandy, Mr. Wolcott. Please don't drink any more," urged his companion. "You wouldn't feel this burning thirst, if you'd give up the use of all intoxicating liquors. Do be persuaded."
- "You preaching to me, young man!" and there was such ineffable scorn in these words, that he to whom they were addressed, was fain to hide his head for very shame. "You preaching to me, when you know no more than the winds which sweep through the forests. I know. Yes, I could preach so the very devils could hear and tremble. I could tell you of a boy who dreamed as bright dreams as you, till the demon took possession of him. I was that boy, and all the years we have struggled and fought, till now the fight

Yes, he'll win! What are you going to do about it, young man? What are you going to do? Did you ever see the wine sparkle, when bright eyes challenged you to drink? Don't drink it! For God's sake, and for your soul's sake, don't! Look at me! See what it has done for me! And a false woman, false as the sparkling wine! There's nothing true, but Heaven; and Heaven's gates are closed for such as me."

"Prayer and repentance will open them," said Harry Manson, unable to keep silence.

"I pray! I repent!" was shrieked, in reply. The demon holds me fast. There's only death and damnation for me. But for you, if you look not upon the wine when it is red, there is life and salvation. Will you heed the warning? Will you heed it?"

"Yes, sir, I will," was the reply. "And you—"

"Will fight it out, bravely,
This demon and I;
We'll fight till he conquers,
And then I shall die."

"Die! Die!" repeated the old man, and strode away.

The fight was, indeed, "almost over." The demon conquered; and only one short month after this, the burial service was read, at the grave of Henry Wolcott.

CHAPTER II.

Youth presses on with eager feet,
Till pausing, where the two ways meet,
Which challenge every human soul,
To life of weakness or control.
The choice is made, the die is cast,
And coming years outweigh the past.

RE you glad you went to see Mr. Wolcott, that last time?" asked Ellis Farley, looking up into his cousin's face.

"Very glad," was the reply. "I wanted to do him good, and I tried."

"But you didn't, cousin Harry. I heard father say that Mr. Wolcott hadn't been sober for more than three weeks; so your going didn't do any good."

"It did me good, Ellis. It made me strong-

er. I wouldn't risk a glass of wine, now, any sooner than I would drink poison. I couldn't help wishing, to-day, that every student had heard what that old man said, the last time I saw him, alive."

"You might write it out, and read it to them, cousin Harry. Some folks that come here drink wine, and I've heard them tell mother it would do me good. But she don't give it to me, and when I grow up, I shan't drink it."

"What is it you shan't drink, when you grow up?" Warren Lewis, just entering the room, asked this question.

"I shan't drink wine," replied the boy.

"Harry says he wont, and you wont, either,
will you cousin Warren?"

A clouded brow, flushed cheeks, and flashing eyes, betrayed far more feeling than the occasion seemed to warrant. "I can't tell what I shall do," was the constrained answer.

"There is no harm in drinking wine, moderately."

"There may be."

"Why, mother, how still you came!" exclaimed Ellis. "I didn't hear your step. Did you mean to surprise us?"

"No, my dear, I was not even thinking of you, till I heard Warren's remark."

"And I wasn't thinking of you, till I heard you answer him. I don't very often forget you, when I'm awake, but I did this time. Has father come?"

"No. I left him talking with our minister."

"Were they talking about Mr. Wolcott?"

"I presume so," answered Mrs. Farley.

"Every one seems to be talking of him, since his death."

"It would be a wonder if people could talk of anything else, this day of all others," said Harry, earnestly. "His history seems too strange to be true. If I had read it, I should

suppose it to be over-drawn. I shall never see any one drink a glass of wine without recalling his words and appearance, the last time I saw him. He might have been mad; but there was method in his madness."

Another temperance lecture, from which Warren Lewis escaped, so soon as civility would allow. Mrs. Farley looked after him, anxiously. He was the son of her brother, and she wished to see him upright in all things. For Harry she had no fears. His mother being her only sister, she knew much of him; but outside the home circle, no one could really appreciate his goodness and truth. His father trusted him, implicitly, his mother and sisters well nigh worshipped him; while his young brothers thought Hal "the most splendid old fellow in the world." Some of his friends thought it strange that he should choose a profession which would give so small opportunity for the display of brilliant talents,

·hence his trouble

but he had chosen, deliberately. "Others may talk, while I work," he was accustomed to say.

Sadie, his invalid sister, three years younger than himself, had reason to rejoice at this decision, since it made him a more tender and observant nurse. He had already read many medical works, and improved every opportunity for gaining medical knowledge.

Neither himself nor cousin caring for a college course, they had come to study under the direction of their uncle, Professor Farley; reciting with some of his public classes, in addition to receiving private instruction. Harry Manson had no definite plans in regard to the time he should spend in study; but his cousin thought two years would suffice.

The latter was troubled when he went to his room, after receiving his aunt's quick rebuke. She was right and he was wrong; hence his trouble. He took from his pocket a note which had been given him an hour before, but which he had forgotten until this moment. It contained an invitation to meet some students for the purpose of forming a club, for mutual improvement.

"Mum's the word, on your honor. Burn this after reading."

This was the conclusion, suspicious in itself; and still more so when connected with the fact that it bore no signature. Warren Lewis did not even know from whom he had received this strange note. A crowd was around him when it had been thrust into his hand; yet the place and time of meeting was designated, so there need be no mistake.

"I say, Hal, can you keep a secret?" he asked, when his cousin came into the room.

"I can, when I have one to keep. I'm not given to gossiping."

- "Well, have you a duplicate of that?"
- "No," answered Harry, glancing carelessly at the paper extended to him.
 - "Ever seen anything like it before?"
- "I guess not. But stay. I've seen the handwriting before."
 - "Where?"
 - "On the blackboard, last week."
- "You are right," exclaimed Warren. "I understand it all now: and I know why I was honored with the mysterious thing. I'd give it to you for perusal, if it didn't put me upon my honor. Fudge on the honor, though. Read it, and help me keep the secret."
 - "Improvement!" said Harry, with a sneer, after reading it. "The secret is safe with me. You don't intend to go?"
 - "Of course I don't," was the reply. "I'll burn the note, and see what comes of it."

 Nothing came of it to the speaker; but

near the close of the school term several students were expelled for disorderly conduct, and with their departure the club ceased to exist. Some one had been disappointed in counting on Warren Lewis.

Meanwhile, he had spent the time profitably, and Christmas found him and his cousin in their city homes. Such welcomes and congratulations as both received might have turned older and wiser heads; yet their homes were very different. Two sisters older than himself, greeted Warren Lewis with true, sisterly affection. His father and mother looked at him with pride. The idol of their hearts, they hoped and believed all things good for him, notwithstanding some youthful follies.

"Most ready for business, my son?" asked Mr. Lewis, rubbing his hands, in a way peculiar to him, when he was in good humor.

"I don't think I am quite fitted for business, yet," was the reply.

"Well, well, time enough yet. No hurry. Time enough for study and business both. I've got along pretty well without much book knowledge; but I want you to do better than I have. There's Harry, now, don't care for much besides sick folks, and books. It seems strange to me; but he's a splendid fellow, though."

"Yes, sir; and sure to make his mark in the world. Cut out for a doctor, too, if ever anybody was. Aunt Ellen says he has done more for Ellis, since he has been there, than their physician. He has a way of exorcising pain, and soothing irritated nerves, without seeming to make any effort."

" And Ellis is better?"

"Yes, sir, very much better than he was last summer. He can stand on his feet, now, and the day before we came away, he took a few steps, with Harry's assistance. It tired him very much, of course, but he

was delighted, and Aunt Ellen really cried for joy."

"Glad to hear he is better," said Mr. Lewis. "But I suppose he will be a cripple."

"Yes, sir, the doctor thinks so."

"Hard case. But your Aunt Ellen will make the best of it, and so will her husband. I am glad my children are so healthy and handsome," added the fortunate man, with a hearty laugh, which seemed contagious, so quickly was it echoed.

"You flatter us," exclaimed one of his daughters.

"Do I? Well, I have just as good a right to flatter you as some other people I know of;" and again the hearty laugh rang out. "We are going to have a Christmas dinner in the old English style," remarked this happy father soon after. "Roast beef, plum pudding, and whatever else your mother and the cook see fit to give us. The girls are talking about holly and evergreen; but I don't know much about such things. I've read of mistletoe, though; and when I was a young man, I used to wish I had a bough to hang over your mother's head. There now, wife, you may have the floor, and say anything you please."

Mr. Lewis was so happy in having his family once more together, that he was excusable for being undignified. His wife, less demonstrative, felt quite as much; rejoicing more in the contents of a letter she had received from Mrs. Farley, than in the presence of her son. He had done well; never deserving reprimand, while at Holcombe. For this she was very thankful; although she knew he had been so guarded from temptation, his own strength was scarcely tested.

A grand Christmas dinner, in the old English style, was not to her taste; but yielding to the wishes of her husband and daughters, she had commenced preparations. There was choice wine in the cellar to be used on this occasion, "of course," said Mr. Lewis. "Who ever heard of a Christmas dinner, without wine?" he asked.

"I presume many people have heard of them," was his wife's reply. "But even if there never had been one, that would be no reason why we should have wine."

"I wish you wouldn't oppose me in this, wife," exclaimed Mr. Lewis, a little impatiently. "I always yield to you, because I know you are wiser than I am; but I've set my heart upon this dinner, wine and all. There can't be any harm in drinking wine once a year. I'm getting to be a regular teetotaler, under your influence, he added, pleasantly. You don't suppose I'd get drunk at my own table, do you?"

"I don't suppose you'd get drunk any-

where;" and Mrs. Lewis looked full in her husband's face as she said this.

"I believe that danger was past years ago, thank God. But we must think of others; your sister's family never use wine. Even the smell of it is disagreeable to Sadie. And husband, you sent Warren to brother Farley's, to keep him out of the way of temptation."

"I know it, wife. I know it. I see your corner. You'll drive me to the wall, and make me give up, as usual."

"But, husband, you know I never wish to oppose you in anything. I only do it when duty compels me."

"I do know it, my dear. You are the best wife in the world. If it hadn't been for you, ten chances to one but I'd been wandering round the country a miserable drunkard. I do hope Warren will get just such a woman as you are for a wife. He's too much like me in some things. That's the trouble with him."

The day before Christmas, Sadie Manson was talking with her mother, in regard to the proposed dinner. "It will be beautiful there, and I shall be very glad to go, if they don't have wine," she said, without looking to see who had just opened the parlor door.

"What's that, puss? You'll be glad to go if they don't have wine?" And there stood Uncle Lewis before her. "They wont have a drop of wine," he continued, rubbing his hands. "The mistress of ceremonies has forbidden it, and the master never opposes her. There's a lesson for you, Sadie. Now, my wife and I don't always think alike; but she's always right, and some way I'm ashamed to stand out against her. Never scolds, you know, but talks what she means, and looks right straight at me, and the minute I see the tears in her brown eyes, I'm ready to go down on my knees to please her. See if you can manage your husband as well, girl. If you can, there will be one good man in the world, while he lives. I was a wild fellow when your aunt took me in hand. I only wonder she had the courage to do it;" and as John Lewis said this, there were tears in his honest blue eyes. "There, I guess I've talked enough about that. Where's Harry?"

"Gone out with the children, to look in the shop windows, and see what there is to be seen."

"I'm sorry for that. The girls want him, at our house; and Warren was so busy, I volunteered to get out of the way, and came after him. About where do you suppose I could find him?"

"I can't tell you," answered his mother,

"After giving the children their treat, he was
going to see a poor boy, on Cady street."

"Poor boy!" repeated Mr. Lewis, with a grimace. "I suppose he's sick, or lame, or something the matter."

"Yes, he is very much like Ellis Farley," was the reply. "His mother washed for me, last summer, and told me about him. She is too poor to pay for proper medical advice, and Harry went there, yesterday. He thinks, perhaps, he can help him in some way."

"No doubt of it, sister, and I think I might help a little. Here's a five dollar bill to buy a Christmas dinner for the poor woman. I want everybody to have a good dinner, tomorrow."

"Such sights and sights of beautiful things," as the children had seen, and "such nice presents" as they had bought for the poor boy Harry had gone to see.

"I tell you, mother, he'll need a pretty big stocking to hold them all," said one.

"Harry bought some flour, and a chicken, and some potatoes, for his mother. Don't you believe they'll be real glad? We went clear to the door, to help carry the things; but Harry said we'd better not go in. Isn't he the splendidest fellow in the world? I mean to be just like him, when I grow up. Wouldn't you, Sadie?"

"I'd be as near like him as I could, was the sister's reply. "Uncle Lewis has been here and gave mother five dollars for Johnny's mother; so they'll have a happy Christmas."

"And we'll have a happy Christmas, too," chimed in two or three voices. "Uncle Lewis found us in one of the stores, and he told us about it. He rubbed his hands all the time, just as he does when he feels real happy; and he said we ought not to eat a mouthful of breakfast, to-morrow."

"And so you propose to fast until dinner," remarked Sadie.

"No, sister, I don't believe I shall," was the reply. "I think I must have a few griddle cakes." And as the speaker had an unusual fondness for such cakes he was cheered, noisily."

The cousins waited long for Harry Manson, who came at last, to say that he could not come before. He was very sorry, but the poor boy he had visited needed so much care that he could not leave.

"What a wonder you are!" said his cousin Mildred. "I'm not sure but I should send for you, myself, if I was sick. I really believe you have done more for Sadie than all the old doctors."

"I have done what I could," was his response. "However, as I am not making a professional call, do please set me to work."

"Yes, give him something to do, and keep him out of mischief," added Warren, who was engaged in festooning evergreen.

At this, Mildred and Harry left the room; and not until the next day, when some mock viands were served at dinner, did any one but the cook suspect how they spent the evening. Mr. Lewis, who always enjoyed a practical

joke, when no one was harmed thereby, rubbed his hands more briskly, and laughed more heartily than ever. The children shouted, and a vote of thanks was tendered to those who had thus contributed to the general amusement.

It was a Christmas not soon to be forgotten. The poor woman to whom timely assistance had been rendered, and the child whose sufferings were relieved were, perhaps, happier than those who needed no assistance. Johnny talked, constantly, sometimes, of the nice gentleman who was going to make him almost well, and sometimes of the presents he had received; while his mother rejoiced in the gladness which made him half forget present discomfort and pain.

"I shan't be lonesome a bit, when you are gone away to work, now," he said, "I shall have so many pretty things to look at, and so many books to read. Aint it

good, mother? And then to think they should all come when you felt so bad. I wish I could see that boy that's lame, just like me; and I do hope my nice gentleman will come again to-morrow."

His hope was realized; and more sure than before that he should be cured, his delight was unbounded. He had gazed at the same narrow strip of sky, counted the same dingy windows, and looked down into the same dirty alley, until the thought of ever going beyond them seemed like a dream, too bright to be realized.

"I shan't mind a bit, if the boys do call me crutchy and limpy," he remarked in the evening, after what was to him, a long silence. My gentleman said I must be patient and gentle; and he said he'd tell me about a poor lame boy, every bit as poor and lame as I am, that made a smart man. If I could only work enough to take care

of you, it would be so nice. Ask God to help me, so I can, won't you, mother? My gentleman said I must ask him; but you're so much larger, he'll hear you first. You will ask him, won't you, mother?"

Mrs. Carr did not reply immediately. In the struggle for daily bread, she had neglected prayer, until she dared not now present her requests to God; but when the question was repeated, she answered, "Yes, child, I will try."

Christmas vacation was not long; but before returning to Holcombe, Harry Manson had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Carr in more comfortable quarters. She was established in two sunny rooms, the chief attractions of which, in Johnny's eyes, were the broad window ledges, upon which were some plants.

"A garden, too," he exclaimed, when he first saw them. "Oh, mother, ain't God

good to let us have all these nice things? And ain't you good, too, my gentleman?" turning to Harry, who looked scarcely less happy than this boy, cradled in his arms. "I want to do something for you. Can't I?"

"Yes; you can be patient and pleasant, and try every day to improve; you must read a little so you may be a good scholar, by and by; and you must do just as the doctor tells you, even if it does seem hard."

Through the influence of Harry, a skillful, kind-hearted physician had consented to take charge of his protege, and there was a prospect of better days for one whose whole life, thus far, had been full of suffering.

Again, at Holcombe, there were long talks about Johnny Carr; Ellis Farley wishing to be told everything in regard to him. "How does he look?" was one of the many questions asked. "Any like me?"

"Not at all," was the reply. "He has black eyes and black hair."

"Then he looks like cousin Warren," remarked Ellis.

"Only the color of their hair and eyes is the same. Johnny's face is very thin, and he has a half-starved look. He has lived all his life in close rooms, where there was neither sunlight nor air. I suspect he has been hungry, sometimes. His mother is very poor."

Then he is a great deal worse off than I am. Why, I never wanted anything in my life, that would do me good, but what father or mother gave it to me. I wish I could send Johnny some of my things. But you don't mean he shall be hungry any more, do you?"

"I don't mean he shall," was the reply.

"The boys are going to look after him, and

his mother will have plenty of work. Uncle Lewis, too, will do something for him."

"Can cousin Sadie go to see him?" asked Ellis.

"I am afraid not, this winter," replied her brother. "She can't go up-stairs, very well, and Johnny lives up-stairs. By next spring, we hope she will be stronger."

"And then she is coming to see me," exclaimed the child, with sudden animation. "And I shall tell her how good you are, and how much I love you. I wish you would stay here, always."

Before leaving home, Warren Lewis had visited Johnny Carr, and given substantial evidence of thoughtful kindness. His sisters, too, were interested in him; and not a letter was received, by the cousins from home, during the winter, but contained some mention of the Carrs. When the spring opened, there had been such decided improvement in

Johnny, that he was able to walk a little, with the aid of crutches; and so happy was he, that had a general shout of derision greeted his appearance on the sidewalk, he might have mistaken it for a disguised welcome.

The welcome, however, was not disguised. He had made friends with the boys of the neighborhood; any one of whom was glad to do him a favor. It was a great day for him, when standing on a level with others, he felt the soft spring breezes fanning his face. And "my gentleman" had wrought the wondrous change for him. "Just the best gentleman in the world," as he told Sadie, when she called upon him, previous to going to Holcombe, for the summer.

"Tell him I love him, wont you?" said Johnny, looking at Sadie, wistfully. "And that other gentleman, that brought me the books, I love him, too. Mother says, perhaps I can do something for them, when I grow up."

All this was repeated at Holcombe; and although Warren Lewis smiled at the thought of this poor boy ever being of service to him, he appreciated the gratitude thus expressed.

The summer passed delightfully. Sadie Manson was able to study some hours of each day, and Ellis grew so much stronger that he seldom needed to be carried, "as a baby." Warren laughingly told Harry that his occupation was gone, unless some new case should present itself.

"It's rather hard on Hal," he said, one evening, when all were in merry mood. "His arms are empty, and just now, having no particular trouble with me, his mission, as a philanthropist, is nearly ended."

"Not yet well commenced," was the reply.

"I see plenty of opportunities for philanthropic efforts."

"I retract Hal. I had forgotten that a physician is a philanthropist, by reason of his profession. Sadie, do you know that father wants Hal to go into business with me? He offers to furnish the capital, and divide the profits between us. I wish you'd persuade the doctor to accept."

But Sadie only shook her head. She had heard the matter discussed at home; and although this offer was one of rare generosity, Mr. Manson was not inclined to urge its acceptance by his son.

"Hal would make a first rate merchant," continued Warren. "He's a grand financier."

"Necessity is a good teacher," replied Harry, smiling. "I have a limited amount of money at my disposal, from which I wish to realize as much as possible."

"If you had said that you wished others to realize from it, as much as possible, you would have come nearer the truth." So these cousins dwelt together in the best possible terms, while two years passed. The time seemed short as they looked back, and there were many regrets at leaving Holcombe. Harry Manson expected to return again, for a few months; but Warren Lewis was through with study.

"You have done well," said his uncle, when they were about to separate. "I have only commendation for you; but the best of your moral strength is yet to come. It has been easy for you to do right here. It may be very hard for you, under different circumstances. The temptations most likely to come to us are those most difficult for us to resist; and you, like all who have lived before you, will need the safeguard of heartreligion. Remember this, my boy, and don't trust your own strength. It would give me great pain, if either you or Harry should go wrong."

"No danger of him, sir," was the reply.

"I'd vouch for him, anywhere; and as for myself, I intend to do about right."

Three months were given to visiting and travel; after which Mr. Lewis and his son talked earnestly of business. "I am willing to work," said the young man in answer to a remark made by his father. "Don't spare me any more than you would an ordinary clerk "I know I ought not to," was the reply. "Hard work is the best thing to keep young folks in the right track. Hard work and your mother kept me where I belonged. I am glad I can do more for my children than my father could for his; but it didn't hurt me to be poor. It's given me a kind feeling for other boys that have to make their own way. I've an eye, now, to Johnny Carr. When he's ready for work I calculate to help him along. He has a clear head for such a boy; and the doctor says, he'll come out all right, except limping a little."

"Yes, Johnny told me so the last time I saw him," answered Warren. "He says he don't care for limping, either, if he can only get over the ground. No danger but he'll keep his feet moving, and his eyes open. I never saw such a change in any one as there has been in him. I should hardly know him, but for his eyes."

"And you could never mistake them, anywhere," said Mr. Lewis. "He's going to be a fine looking man, if nothing happens to him. You had better go in and see him occasionally. Sadie looks after him; but she has other poor children on her hands, and we better help Johnny ourselves."

Warren Lewis entered his father's store, and applied himself to business; shirking no duty, and claiming no privilege on account of his position. Those who looked to see him supercilious or arrogant, were agreeably disappointed. At his post, early and late, nothing escaped his observation.

"I'm disappointed in our boy, wife," said Mr. Lewis, after Warren had been in the store about four months.

"How? Why?" asked Mrs. Lewis, anxiously, before her husband's hearty laugh dispelled her fears.

"I didn't expect he'd take to work and business very well, at first; but Mr. Jewett says he's the best clerk we ever had;" and as Mr. Jewett was senior partner of the firm, he was qualified to judge. "I always knew there was enough to him to make most anything; but I was a little afraid he'd take a wrong tack. He can't do anything by halves; and I believe 'twould kill me if he should turn out as some of our young men do. But there's no danger now; and I tell you, wife, it's a great relief to me to know it."

Mrs. Lewis could not be quite so sanguine, when she remembered her son's former indiscretions; yet she rejoiced in the present, and hoped for the future.

Meanwhile, the fashionable world was in the midst of a gay season; and Warren was invited, with his sisters, to numerous parties where few refused the sparkling wine. Mildred Lewis was willing to be singular that she might restrain her brother; while Fanny, the elder and more worldly sister, yielding to family influence, never drank wine in his presence. The father thought all this unnecessary, but accustomed to trust the judgment of his wife, uttered no protest.

"It is well enough now," he reasoned with himself. "When Warren is older he will do as others do, and have judgment to know when he has gone far enough."

Some bantering there was, some challenges, and some smiling invitations not easily resisted; but the young man parried these lightly, without claiming that he acted from principle or previous decision. He had not forgotten Mr. Wolcott's terrible career, or the

pledge made by Harry Manson after the last interview with this unhappy man.

"I shall never while I live drink a glass of wine; and I will do all in my power to prevent others drinking."

"Look out, Hal, you may wish to break that pledge," he had then said. "It may be for your interest to do so."

"Never!" was the decided reply. "Never for my best interest. I wish you would make the same pledge, Warren. It would be worth a fortune to you."

"Pshaw! that's your way of talking;" answered the cousin. "I shall bind myself by no such promises. It's too childish for one who expects to live among men of the world. Nobody but you would think of such a thing."

"I've heard of others;" Harry said.

"And more fools they. I don't intend to join their ranks," was Warren's response. It was not, then, because he was pledged to abstinence that he refused to drink wine; but because he had a fancy for so doing, at this time. He had no fears of becoming a drunkard, under any circumstances; and although he seldom argued with Harry, he thought so much feeling fanatical and foolish. Yet there was his mother agreeing with Harry; and Sadie, carrying the matter still further. She did not hesitate to say that she considered liquor drinking the greatest evil in the world.

Warren was learning to love this cousin, so pure in her beauty and goodness; and denied himself many a fragrant cigar, that he might feel at liberty to seek her society. No smoking was allowed among the students at Holcombe; but at home this indulgence was not under ban. Mr. Lewis, being himself a smoker, rather enjoyed his son's companionship in the habit.

"My gentleman" was away during the winter; but in his absence Johnny was comforted by frequent visits from young Mr. Lewis, whose interest in the grateful boy increased with each visit. It was a pleasure to see the pale face flush, and the dark eyes flash beneath his gaze. A pleasure, too, to listen to the honest outpourings of a warm affectionate heart, rather than a dull round of civil speeches, containing neither wit nor wisdom.

"I'm learning as fast as I can," was Johnny's oft-repeated assurance. "Miss Sadie says if I am good, I shall have a house all my own, when I grow up. She says I can earn it. Does it really seem as though I could, Mr. Lewis?" he asked.

"It seems to me as though you could," was the reply. "Don't you believe every thing that Sadie tells you?"

"Yes, sir; indeed I do," answered the

boy. "She tells me a great many things; and I believe every word; but to believe that I shall ever have a nice house, all my own, is too much. I told mother it was just like a fairy story, the way we live now; and that would be too good."

No wonder the child thought the change in himself and his home like a fairy story. When in the spring, Paul and George Manson invited him to walk with them to one of the public parks, and he could go dressed so that they were not ashamed of him, he no longer doubted Miss Sadie's prophecy. As it chanced, he saw other boys who were lame; but of all, he thought himself happiest. No one called him "crutchy," while many smiled upon him, reflecting the bright smile which lighted up his own face.

"We might go round by Uncle Lewis' store, on our way home, if you aren't too tired," said Paul, after a time.

"Oh, I ain't a bit tired," was the reply; and soon after three boys looked in at the open door of a large establishment, where clerks and customers discussed the market value of various kinds of goods. A lad was running from one to another, intent upon obeying orders, and all too much occupied to notice the young visitors.

"We can go in, if we don't get in the way," said Paul, stepping inside the door.
"There's cousin Warren," he added, in a whisper.

"Shouldn't you like to be in that boy's place?" asked Johnny, when they had stood there for a few minutes.

"I'd rather be out doors than shut up in the house. But he likes it."

To Paul and his brother this busy scene was nothing new; but to their companion it was another glimpse of the fairy land of which he dreamed.

"What are you going to do when you grow up?" he asked, as they walked slowly home, and was not surprised at the answer that they should do just what brother Harry thought best.

Holding an office which demanded his whole time and energy for the discharge of its duties, Mr. Manson was only too glad to trust the judgment of his eldest son in various matters pertaining to the interests of his family. And Harry was equal to the emergency. His abounding health, energy, cheerfulness and goodness, fitted him to bear responsibilities. "The more the better," he was accustomed to say laughingly, seeming to banish pain and anxiety with his hearty words and magic touch.

When he was at home, each day was counted a holiday. Greatly to the delight of all, he remained at home for several months, pursuing his studies, and making

was taken under his especial care; and many another, poor and lame, learned to look for his coming as the weary look for rest. Ambitious to excel in his chosen profession, he allowed nothing to distract his attention. His old companions complained that he gave them so little time; while his cousin protested that he was more of a philanthropist than ever.

"You ought to be the pioneer in some great reform, Hal," he said. "Your name should go down to posterity, linked with some grand work for the amelioration of human guilt and human suffering."

"If I may but do the work, another may bear the name," was Harry Manson's sincere answer. "Perhaps I shall come to you for money to help carry out my plans, yet. You know my silver spoon was plated while yours was of pure metal."

"I hope to have my spoon of gold instead of silver, sometime," Warren responded. "Do you know, Hal, I mean to be a very rich man."

"And a very good one?" was asked in reply.

"Oh, I mean to do about right," the young man answered. "I don't make any pledges; but I expect to come out as well as those who do. A man of the world should govern himself according to circumstances. Now don't look at me that way, Hal," he added, reproved by his cousin's glance. "You know I mean to be honest and honorable, and all that, if I don't draw the lines quite so straight as you do. I don't think any one has had reason to complain of me, since I left Holcombe."

"No, Warren; every one commends you, and I hope to see you one of the merchant princes of the country. But I do wish you

would draw some lines a little straighter."
Both understood what lines were intended,
yet neither would speak more plainly.

CHAPTER III.

The ways diverge; it may be far
One sees, beyond the guiding star;
Yet still it shines, serene and bright,
Though passing clouds obscure its light;
And blest are they who, trusting God,
Walk firmly in the narrow road.

native city few doubted that Warren Lewis would reach the goal of his ambition. Old men wondered at his prudence, young men at his application. His father was so proud of him, his mother so fond, and his sisters so confident, that where he was concerned they seldom questioned.

His father's only regret in regard to him,

was that he remained unmarried, when he ought to have a good wife, and a home of his own.

"I don't see through it," said Mr. Lewis.

"The boy can't have been refused, anywhere, can he?"

"I've never thought so," was the reply of his mother. "Because you were determined to marry when you were only twenty-three years old, you seem to think every young man should follow your example."

"No, wife, not quite so bad as that," said her husband, catching the mischievous twinkle in her brown eyes. "I was determined to be married when I was twenty-three, and the only thing about it I'm sorry for, is that I wasn't married sooner. But here's Warren, with income enough to support a wife in good style, and not a sign of his being married as I can see, though he is most twenty-seven years old. I wish I knew

what's the matter. I've tried to talk with him about it, but he always dodges the subject."

Warren Lewis had not been refused, in the common acceptation of that term; but he had been wise enough to see that an incipient passion for his cousin Sadie would never be returned, and governed himself accordingly. When rallied upon his bachelorhood, he answered according to his mood, gayly or gravely, as suited him; while only Harry Manson suspected the truth. His sisters married, and established in happy homes, had manœuvered, in a quiet way, to lure him into matrimony, but as yet, with no prospect of success. He seemed to think only of buying and selling.

He devoted little time to travelling; but an opportunity for a western trip presented itself, which he was glad to improve. Some business in one of the lake cities required attention, and he was chosen to transact it.

"Act according to your own judgment in the matter," said Mr. Jewett, the day before he was to leave. "We trust you implicitly, and shall be satisfied with whatever you think best to do. Those western men are shrewd and sharp; but they go a little too fast, sometimes. I'll risk you with them, though. Take your own time and enjoy it."

"Yes, sir," answered Warren, gratified with the gentleman's expression of confidence, and anticipating much pleasure in the trip. He wished his cousin, Dr. Manson, to accompany him, and had urged it, until convinced that no urging would avail. The doctor could not be absent from his patients, for so long a time, without injury to his profession; and moreover, his silver spoon was only plated, even now.

Many responsibilities had come to him;

all of which he had borne bravely and cheerfully; but now, sorrowing for the death of his wife, it was hard to be either brave or cheerful. The fact that consumption had marked her, as its victim, before he had ever seen her, made his grief no less poignant. He had loved and cared for her, with the utmost tenderness; his love making more beautiful, a life already beautiful in itself, and giving him a rare, sweet experience he could never forget. He needed change and rest; but he denied himself these, as he often denied himself, when duty and inclination were at variance.

Seldom now, did he presume to caution or counsel the cousin, whose hand was still outstretched to receive a golden spoon. "A man of the world," was a phrase often upon the lips of this young merchant; while he prided himself upon the coolness of his calculations, and the certainty of their results.

As the representative of a wealthy eastern firm, he was welcomed in the west, by business acquaintances, who offered him every civility. He was welcomed to their homes; he inspected their stores, and listened to enthusiastic descriptions of the resources of their country.

"It's a place for a young man to make money," was the concluding remark of many with whom he conversed; and this did not fail of its intention. Long before he had accomplished the purpose of his visit, he began to question seriously if it was not the place for him.

He was a partner in the firm of "Jewett, Lewis & Son;" but here, in a new country, he could make bolder ventures, with less competition. He was charmed with everything he saw. There was more room than in the east. The business men were younger, more sanguine, and more daring. Nothing occurred to impress him unfavorably; and he returned home, with somewhat extravagant ideas of himself, and the section of country he had visited.

In transacting the business, entrusted to him, he had done better for the firm than was expected. Mr. Jewett, with whom he was a great favorite, complimented him, in unmeasured terms; adding carelessly, "Didn't get the western fever out there, I hope."

"I am afraid I did," was the reply. "I feel some symptoms of it. I am satisfied that is just the place for me. There is a good opening for our business, in any one of the western cities I visited; and with my knowledge of it, with the capital we have invested here, I could make twice the profits."

"Perhaps you could, but there would be some risks." answered Mr. Jewett. "We are doing a good, safe business; and in time, you'll come in for a large share of it. We

can't spare you any way. Remember that, and don't let the fever run too high."

Thus Mr. Jewett dismissed the matter; but his partner found it more difficult. "And you think you can do better there, than here," said Mr. Lewis to his son, when the subject was under discussion.

"I am sure that I can," was the reply.

"I can do a great deal, with small capital, and in a few years, build up an extensive business. I have thought it all over, and calculated the chances, carefully. I saw young men there, not thirty years old, who have already made large fortunes; and I understand business much better than they did, when they began. I've set my heart upon going there, father."

"So I see," replied the father, sadly. "I'm sorry for it, and I'm afraid your mother will think it's a bad move. If she does, I wish you'd hear to her. I never did anything

against her advice, without being sorry for it."

"But mother understands nothing about this," replied Warren, smiling. "She will see but one side of the question, and wish me to remain at home."

"And I wish it, too," said Mr. Lewis.
"I thought you considered yourself permanently established here."

"So I did, father. But my western trip has entirely changed my ideas. I could do a great deal better there, while you and Mr. Jewett are perfectly able to carry on the business here. We could help each other too, in the way of trade, and so all be benefited. You would see the advantage of the change, for any other young man."

"Perhaps so," was the reply. "But money isn't the only thing in the world, worth having."

When Warren Lewis appealed to his

mother, he found that she had considered the question, not only upon one side, but all sides. His presence at home, was very dear to her, yet she was ready at any time, to sacrifice her own preference to his best good. She listened to him patiently, expressing no doubt of his judgment, or ability.

"You see, mother, I could get rich there in half the time I can here;" he said at length.

"That is very probable, my son," she replied. "But there are some things better than riches; and I am, by no means sure that you are the right one to go west. In some respects your principles are not so firm as they should be."

The young man understood this. His mother was a Christian; and he knew that far more than she desired for him any earthly good, did she desire that his life might be approved of God. Often had she

told him that religion was the only safeguard against temptation; yet he had perfect confidence in his own powers of resistance. Of course he conformed his habits to those of the society in which he moved. Bound by no pledges, he acted according to circumstances; and truth to tell, had preserved more of uprightness and honor than is usual for those who adopt his motto. But his mother saw danger. She knew his weak points, and dreaded the temptations to which he might be exposed in a different position. Dr. Manson, too, shared the mother's anxiety. He knew, even better than she, how a clearheaded, shrewd business man could be transformed into a reckless, over-confident speculator, yet Warren Lewis might escape the danger which threatened him, amid new surroundings and under new influences. Most of his acquaintances would have ridiculed the idea of danger.

Certain it was that the experiment would be made, sooner or later, and his moral strength really tested. His father accustomed himself to the thought of living without his son, until he came to think more of the advantages of the proposed plan, than of it's disadvantages.

"The distance between us wont be very great," he said to his wife. "After all, I can't blame the boy. What is called the west now, is going to be the very centre of our country; and there's no doubt but it's the place for a young man to make his mark. Warren has made up his mind to go, and I shan't oppose him any longer. I'll do the best I can for him, and then he must do the rest for himself. I wish though, he was going to take a good wife with him. Such a girl now as Sadie, would be sure to keep him right, just as you have me. And that makes me think, from some thing her mother said to me, this morning, I expect she is going to be married, before long."

"Yes, she is," answered Mrs. Lewis. "And I think the man who is to be her husband is as nearly worthy of her, as any mortal can be."

"He's a widower, I hear," said Mr. Lewis.
"Yes; but no worse for that," was the

reply. "I have been waiting to congratulate her."

The gentleman, who would have considered it a compliment to be thought nearly worthy of Sadie Manson, was a friend of her brother's; and one whom Harry thoroughly trusted. Having learned this, her uncle was ready to offer his congratulations with those of his wife.

"So you are going to leave your father and mother, after all the trouble they've had in bringing you up," he remarked to Sadie, when next they met. "That's the way; just as soon as children get to be of any use to us, they are off with some stranger or other, who, likely, don't care half so much for them as we do. What do you think of that, Miss? Perhaps you haven't thought anything about it, but I have. Both of our girls are gone, and Warren just ready for a start; so wife and I have got to keep house alone, same as we did at first."

A long speech this; but everybody knew Uncle John was in good humor; he rubbed his hands so briskly, and laughed so heartily, at the close of his speech.

"Then Warren is really going," said Mrs. Manson, while Sadie attempted no reply to her uncle's address.

"Yes, and pretty soon, too," was answered.

"He received a letter, last week, that settled everything, and I suppose he'll leave us by the first of next month."

It was no time, then, to expostulate; but

Harry Manson could not allow his cousin to go, without making one more effort to change his views in regard to wine drinking. He was moved to repeat the questions which, with such startling earnestness, had been asked by the hermit of Holcombe,—"What are you going to do about it, young man? What are you going to do? Did you ever see the wine sparkle when bright eyes challenged you to drink?" And then the warnings:—"Don't drink it. For God's sake, and your soul's sake, don't."

"I have always wished that you had been with me the last time I saw Mr. Wolcott," said Dr. Manson, breaking the silence which followed this repetition.

"And I am glad I was not," replied his companion. "I never had any fancy for listening to the ravings of a madman. I am more than satisfied to take them at second-hand."

"But there was method in his madness," responded the doctor, without appearing to observe the implied censure. "You know that his intemperate habits were the cause of his ruin. A false woman and wine wrought his destruction."

"And you really believe that, Hal?"

"I know it," was answered, seriously.

"Well, perhaps you are right, though I am disposed to question it. It's my opinion the man never had a very strong mind. One woman is not all the world, and a glass of wine is not the most dangerous of comforters. You see, Wolcott ought to have gone to work with double energy, after he failed. He might have retrieved his fortune, if he was half as smart as his friends pretended. Depend upon it, there was something wrong about him to begin with. Wine is good in its place; and as most people drink it, the best way is to drink with them,

and say nothing about it. I suppose it's bad for some weak-headed ones, but they must look out for themselves."

"And you don't believe in trying to save them, Warren? You can't mean that. I have more faith in your good sense and good feeling, than to believe you mean what you say."

"Well, well, Hal, I won't quarrel with you, for your good opinion of me, though I can't agree with your quixotic notions. I am willing to admit, however, that you are better than I. Do you think there is danger of my being ruined by wine?" and the question was asked confidently, as though but one reply was possible.

"Of course you expect me to tell the truth," said Harry.

"Of course;" and still the same confidence was manifested.

"Then I tell you, honestly, that I think there is danger, cousin Warren."

"Hal Manson, how dare you say that to me?" exclaimed Waren Lewis.

"Because you asked me what I thought, and I would not wrong you by telling a falsehood. You can afford to hear the truth."

"I can't afford to be insulted," was the reply. Then, in a different tone, was added, "Oh, Hal, how could you say that? Do you really believe it?"

"I do," answered the doctor, sadly. "I know you drink wine."

"But never to excess. I drink with others as a matter of civility; and sometimes I feel the need of a little stimulant."

"Oh, Warren, has it come to that?"

"Come to what? I don't see anything that demands such a look of holy horror.

One would think I had confessed myself guilty of murder. I am able to regulate my own habits; and it is nothing strange for one to require stimulants. Don't you ever make use of them in your practice?"

"I never prescribe them for people in good health," was the reply. "You need stimulants no more than I do."

"Well, old fellow, don't look at me in that way," said Warren Lewis. "I don't want to quarrel with you, just as I am going away. If we can't think alike about everything, we can at least agree to think differently. That old hermit's ravings must have turned your brain a little, on the subject of wine drinking. I believe in what some call an elegant use of wine; but I abhor drunkenness with my whole soul. Why, doctor, there is hardly a business man in the city, would adopt your extreme whims. Father is very temperate, but then, it is to please mother."

Dr. Manson walked across his office floor, looked from the window a moment, and then reseated himself with the air of one who had made an important decision.

"You have spoken truly of your father," he said. "Your mother's influence saved him from threatened ruin. I have heard Aunt Ellen and my mother say, that but for his wife their brother would have been a drunkard. I would not have spoken of this, under other circumstances. I would give the best years of my future life to be assured that you would forswear wine drinkink."

"I will forswear it, whenever I am injured by it," was the reply. "At present I am in no danger;" and there was a coldness in this speech, which grated harshly on the listener's ears. "It is time for me to go. Good-bye, doctor."

"Good-bye, cousin Warren."

Their hands met. "You're a good fellow, Hal," Warren Lewis felt constrained to say. "I wish I was as good as you are; but we must each of us go his own way.

If I needed a friend, I'd trust you against the world. Thank you, too, for all you've done for me; and do try to think of me, at my best, even if we don't agree about everything."

"I shall always think of you, at your best, Warren, and if I can ever be of service to you, you have but to command me. Goodbye."

One went out, strong in health and ambitious projects, confident of his ability to win a princely fortune. The other, looking forward anxiously, feared that manliness might be wrecked, ere the fortune was won.

Warren Lewis stopped for a night at Holcombe, on his way west; and there expressed his hopes and wishes without reserve. Still the same. Money, position and influence, were talismanic words for him.

"Go west with me, and I will make a merchant of you," he said to his cousin Ellis.

"But I don't wish to be made into a merchant," answered Ellis, laughing. "Thank you, all the same, but I have no vocation for making money. I prefer a laboratory to a counting room, and retorts and crucibles to bills and ledgers."

"Then you are really to be a chemist."

"Yes, a chemist, a naturalist, and perhaps a star-gazer. You see I have a variety of tastes; and father allows me to indulge them all, if I don't confine myself too much in doors. Next winter I am going to spend a few weeks at Uncle Manson's, and then cousin Harry is to introduce me to some gentlemen who will teach me more than I can learn here."

"Well, everybody to their own work," responded the young merchant. "There's Hal, doing his work so cheerfully, that I must admire him, while I wonder that he can tolerate such a life."

"I think everybody must admire cousin Harry," Ellis replied. "It seems to me he is nearly perfect. So good and loving; and yet so brave and strong. I was so sorry that he must lose his wife, when if anybody deserved a happy life, he does."

"Yes; but he knew his wife would live only a short time, when he married; so her death was not unexpected. Not many men would have married as he did. Didn't you think it strange, Aunt Ellen?" added Warren, turning to Mrs. Farley.

"Not after seeing Amy, and knowing as I did, that she was as good as she was beautiful. It was like Harry to love her, and had it been possible for human skill to save her, she would have glorified his life. Harry takes high rank as a physician, already. We owe him a great deal for what he has done for Ellis."

"And there is Johnny Carr, the most

grateful fellow you ever saw in your life, and bidding fair to make a very smart man. My gentleman, as he calls Harry, gets most of the credit for this. Johnny has been in our store for more than a year, and I mean to have him West with me, sometime. He is to be depended upon."

Johnny Carr had heard of this plan for himself; and with the eagerness, natural to his age and temperament, accepted it as sure to be realized, if his mother could be persuaded to go with him. He would never leave her while she lived. His highest ambition was to provide for her, so that she could dress handsomely, and fold her hands in elegant idleness. He had whiled away many a weary hour, in picturing to himself the home he would make for the dear, good mother, who had worked so hard for him.

She, poor woman, felt herself amply repaid for all her labor, when she saw her son among his fellows, so slightly lame, that it was hardly observed, and knowing as she did, that he was worthy of confidence and respect. He had earned money in different ways, before entering the store of Mr. Lewis; but there he received regular wages, and thought himself on the highway to fortune.

Warren was missed at the old stand; yet gradually, matters adjusted themselves to the new order of things, and business went on as before.

At the same time, a young merchant made his bow to a western community, and solicited a share of their patronage. His store was well located and judiciously stocked; while the gentlemanly proprietor was always visible to customers. He understood his business, and was not above giving it his attention. Of course he would succeed, as everybody said. People were not long in concluding, also that he would be popular in society.

There was just enough of reserve in his manner, under some circumstances, to inspire faith in his prudence.

Mr. Lewis visited his son at the end of six months, and was half inclined to become a western merchant himself. "Now, father, don't you believe what I told you?" was the question often asked him.

"I believe you did well to come here," was the reply, upon one occasion. "It's just the place for you; and if I was ten years younger, I'd come here myself. People move pretty fast, though; and I can't help thinking some of them live too fast. Your mother wouldn't approve of some things I've seen."

"Probably not," responded Warren, with a blush, conscious that his father was observing him closely. "But with the Romans, one must do as the Romans. Mother's code of morals is very strict."

"None too strict, my son. I wish you had such a wife as she has been to me."

"I wish," commenced the young man, but no matter.—There is something of more importance I wish to talk about, with you."

Buying, selling, and the chances of a rise in the market were the most important subjects of which they talked; and when the visit had ended, Mr. Lewis felt confident of his son's future. They had disgreed upon only one point. The father wished to retain the services of Johnny Carr; while the son wished to secure them for himself, offering to pay twice the wages the young clerk now received.

"I don't think his mother will be willing he should come," said Mr. Lewis, senior. "She could hardly live without him, and it is too much to expect her to come here. I wish for your sake, however, that you had

him, in place of that pale faced clerk of yours. I don't like the looks of that face. If the owner don't drink too much wine, and smoke too many cigars, I'm mistaken in my judgment of him."

"I am afraid you are right, father, and I have cautioned him once. But it don't seem to be my business, as long as he never gives me any cause for complaint, here in the store. He is a good salesman, and strictly honest, so far as I can see. I don't want Johnny in his place; but I am getting to need another clerk, and can afford to pay one good wages. I must write to him about it, and if he comes, that will make room in your store for Paul Manson."

The letter was written, within a few weeks; but before it reached its destination, there was no mother to be consulted. She had died suddenly, and Johnny, left alone, desired to go to Warren Lewis. Of course Dr. Man-

son read the letter, and considered the expediency of acceding to its request. His protege was really a remarkable boy. The discipline of suffering and patient waiting had developed traits of character, rarely seen in one so young. He had the implicit faith in God's wisdom and justice which most people learn to exercise only after long lives of change and trial. It was this faith which gave to him such earnestness of purpose; and which moved him to do, with his might, whatever his hands found to do. This faith, too, enabled him to bear the loss of his mother, with Christian resignation.

Dr. Manson thought of all this; giving him full credit for the sincere piety which manifested itself in the faithful discharge of every day's duties. But was he so armed against temptation, that he would not fall into its insidious snares? Would he resolutely close eyes and ears to the fascinations, which lure

so many to destruction? Was it safe to test his strength, where weakness would prove his utter ruin?

The doctor forgot that any one waited for him to speak, until reminded by a slight movement of his companion.

"I was thinking," he then said. "You would like to go West."

"Yes, sir. But I promised mother I would do as you think best; and if you say I ought not to go, I will stay where I am."

"Contentedly?"

"Yes, sir," was said, after some hesitation.
"Young Mr. Lewis wants me, and I should like to work for him; but I can stay here."

"And do you think it will be as easy for you to do right there as here?"

"I hope so, sir. At any rate, I must do right, whether it is hard or easy. I promised mother—" But here tears choked his voice.

"Oh, Dr. Manson, I can never forget what

she told me, and what I promised her the day before she died," he continued. "She said I might tell you. My father was a drunkard," he half whispered. "It was that made mother so poor, and me so -" He did not complete the sentence. His friend had suspected the truth; and knowing that children are often cursed by the sins of their parents, did not need that more be said. "I promised her I would never, never, never taste a drop of liquor, so long as I live. She made me repeat never three times, and call God to witness my promise. I never have tasted a drop of liquor, and now I never shall."

"But if you were in a large company, where everybody else drank wine, and you were urged to drink too, what then?"

"I should keep my promise, of course.

Do you think I wouldn't?"

"No, John. I believe you would keep

your promise. But most people would ridicule you for such abstinence. Warren Lewis drinks wine, without scruple."

"But he isn't a drunkard."

"No; he is a temperate drinker. I presume he would be considered a very temperate drinker. Most of the young men, with whom you will come in contact, will probably urge you to drink with them."

"But I shan't drink if they do urge me," said John, decidedly. "I shan't mind what they say, either."

Long, Dr. Manson and his companion talked; the latter revealing, with every word, some warning given by his mother. In her last hours, Mrs. Carr had spoken freely of many things, in regard to which John had often wondered. Her history was like that of many a woman, who, bound to one, every way unworthy of her, is dragged down from one degree of wretchedness to

only love for her child made existence tolerable. For him she worked when she would not have worked for herself: her heart growing harder, with each succeeding year, until she made the acquaintance of Mrs. Manson. Since then, everything had changed. Religion had beautified her life, making her home the very gate of heaven, through which she passed to that upper home, where comes neither sorrow nor sighing.

It seemed to Dr. Manson, as he listened to a recital of her last counsels to her son, that she had left nothing for another to say; and although he ventured some suggestions, which were kindly received, he felt them to be unnecessary. Then they came back to the question to be decided. Should John, as his companions were learning to call him, go West? Objections lost their significance, when considered in connection with the

pledges he had given, and the principles he had adopted.

"You may be able to serve my cousin in other ways than as a clerk," said the doctor. "I know you will have his best good always at heart."

"Yes, sir, I will," was the reply. "I will pray that he may become a Christian.

Next to you, I owe more to him than to any one else, except my mother. He has been very kind to me."

A call for the doctor's professional services interrupted this conversation, and in the days which intervened, before John Carr left for the West, there was opportunity for little more than an exchange of good-byes.

Warren Lewis welcomed the young man, explained his duties, and assured him that he would soon feel quite at home.

"A little strange at first," said the merchant. "You'll miss Mr. Jewett, and father; but we get more elbow room here, and live faster than they do."

John was quick to learn his duties, and ready to perform them; but there was some difficulty in regard to his boarding-place.

He was not satisfied with the one which had been provided. Indeed, after a short trial, he refused to be associated in any way, with those into whose society he was thrown. He could not tolerate the roystering manners and questionable conversation of young men, who thought themselves his superior, because they knew more of vice and dissipation.

His employer had not thought of this want of sympathy, although he reproached himself for thoughtlessness at the first mention of John's dissatisfaction. "Of course you shall change," he said. "I wish you to be contented and happy, and if you can't be so, in one place, you must in another. But really, I don't know how to select for

you. Suppose you try for yourself. In a few weeks you will learn enough of the people and places, about you, to make a proper selection. Don't get homesick, Johnny," he added, addressing him by the old name. "I know you must be lonely."

Poor John was almost ready to wish himself back in the old place. He was so lonely; a stranger in a strange city. He had left a pleasant circle of acquaintances; while here, he was only "Mr. Lewis' clerk."

- "A real parson," said one of his fellow boarders, who might profitably have copied his example.
- "He'll get over that," said another, laughing scornfully.
- "Don't you believe it," was the reply.

 "Any fellow that can read his Bible and pray before folks, as he does, without blushing, don't get over it so easy. I tell you he's a real Puritan, dyed in the wool. But he's

smart though. Jefts says he is posted in business. Got eyes in the back side of his head, too; and it's my opinion he'll use them to good advantage."

"Jefts don't like him; does he?"

"Yes and no, both. He can't find any fault with him, any more than we can; but the whole story is, he aint one of our kind. Mr. Lewis would trust him against anybody."

"Well, never mind that. We've talked enough about Carr for once. He's well enough in his place, and that's an old fashioned prayer meeting;" and this last remark, which was thought to be very witty, called forth a shout of laughter.

Had John Carr heard it, he would have said, with a pleasant smile, "you are right in regard to the prayer meeting. It is just the place for me." While his character was thus discussed, he was in his place; at home, with Christians. Joining with them in prayer

and praise, he felt himself no longer alone. Kind faces beamed upon him; and stranger though he was, a bond of fellowship was acknowledged.

For a few days he boarded in the house with Mr. Lewis, where, being the youngest of the family, he was treated with great consideration. After this, having become acquainted with a young man, of like tastes as his own, who lived with his mother in a pleasant part of the city, he preferred a home with them; and arrangements being made satisfactory to all, he took possession of a room, which had been fitted up expressly for him.

- "Contented now?" asked his employer, soon after this change had been affected.
- "Yes, sir, I am," was the reply. "Mrs.

 Barton seems almost like my own mother,
 and I feel perfectly at home."
 - "I am glad to hear that," responded Mr.

Lewis, heartily. "I ought to have remembered that you are different from most others of your age."

"How am I different, sir?" asked John.
"I hope I am not less willing to work and do
my duty."

"You are more willing to do your duty, and just there is the difference," was answered. "I congratulate myself upon having one clerk I can trust, without reserve. I know you miss your old friends, but I intend to do well by you, and you will soon make other friends. I suppose you hear from Paul Manson."

"Yes, sir; and he likes his place in the store very much. He can be trusted anywhere."

"I know he can. All of Aunt Manson's children are models of truth and sincerity. The doctor was always a wonder in that way."

"He is so good," was the reply. "I remember just how he looked, the first time I ever saw him. My gentleman seemed to me an angel then. Paul says he has so much business, he hardly gets time to eat or sleep; and his mother thinks he ought to go away and rest. I wish he would come out here."

"We must invite him to come, when we can make a better display of goods and profits," said Warren Lewis. "By the way, did you see Jefts, last evening?"

"No, sir; I never saw him in the evening," replied John.

"I thought he didn't look quite right this morning, when he came in. Did you observe it?" continued the merchant.

"Yes, sir; and I heard him say he had a severe headache."

"I presume he had. I wish you could manage to talk with him about some of his habits. He is very active, and I should be sorry to part with him; but I am afraid he is injuring himself."

Mr. Lewis knew what he professed to fear; yet he would not speak more explicitly. Albert Jefts was never absent from the store, during business hours, and never remiss in his duties. If dissipated, as no one could doubt who saw him, he, as yet, held himself in check, with a firm hand. Having few sympathies in common with him, the new clerk had been satisfied to meet him on strictly business terms.

When alone, John Carr thought of what had been said, wondering if it were possible for him to influence this young man to live differently.

In less than a week, Albert Jefts came into the store a full hour later than usual. His face was flushed, and his eyes were bloodshotten. When walking, he sometimes reached out his hand, as if for support. Often he raised his hand to his forehead, as though brushing from it something which troubled him. He paused abruptly in what he was doing, his mind seeming to be pre-occupied. As the day wore on, he appeared less able to control himself; but business crowded, and Mr. Lewis had no time to look after his clerks.

About one hour before the store was to be closed, a customer came in to say that the goods he had just received were not such as he had bargained for. "They come short both in quantity and quality." The complaint was made to Mr. Lewis.

"The mistake shall be rectified," he said, blandly. "You shall have no cause for dissatisfaction. It is the first complaint of the kind, I have heard; and I will make sure of its being the last."

So far as the customer was concerned, this difficulty was easily settled; but the clerk who

had caused it would be held to strict account. No questions, however, were asked, until the next morning, when Jefts was summoned to the private office of his employer.

"I made the mistake yesterday," said the young man, hurriedly. "My head was wrong, and I ought to have been in bed, instead of being here. I am very sorry for what happened, and hope you will pardon me. I believe it is my first offence."

"Yes, it is," answered the merchant, surprised at this abrupt confession, made before a charge had been preferred. "I am quite ready to pardon you; but if you were unable to attend to your duties, you should have given yourself a day's rest. I am afraid, Jefts, that you are living too fast. I wish you would do differently."

"Yes, sir; I must do differently. Are you satisfied with me here?"

"Certainly. Yet I should be sorry to have

another mistake like that of yesterday. I think we understand each other."

"Yes, sir;" and Jefts bowed himself from the room. In his confusion, he stumbled upon John Carr, who apologized for being in the way. "I was in the way myself," he replied. "I believe I am in everybody's way; and in my own, most of all."

This last was said so bitterly, that John caught the hand of the speaker, and held it fast, saying, "Can't I help you? I wish I could. I have needed so much help myself, that I am always wishing to help others."

- "But what if I don't need help?" asked Jefts, in a tone the coldness of which belied the expression of his face.
- "You are different from other people, if you never need help," was the reply.
- "I am different;" and the laugh which supplemented this was as full of bitterness and mockery as that of any sin-hardened wretch.

No more could be said at that time; but at night, John Carr walked down the street with Albert Jefts, although aware that his company was not desired. Twice they encountered a flashily-dressed, sinister-looking man, who bowed with easy confidence at each meeting.

"Who is he?" asked John.

"Would you like to make his acquaintance?" was asked, in reply. "He is an admirer of young men, if they have plenty of money. Pardon me," added the speaker, changing his tone, "I am out of sorts, this evening. That man is a scoundrel;" and he glanced around furtively, as though fearing to be overheard.

"He looks like it," said John. "I have no wish to make his acquaintance. I only thought it strange that such a man should bow to you."

"You'd think some other things stranger still. But, Carr, what are you going this way for? You'll have a long walk, before you get to your boarding-place; and I don't think my company is so agreeable that you can care for it."

"I don't think you are well to-night," was the evasive reply.

"I am able to take care of myself, at any rate; and you might as well let me go," answered Jefts. "I've no doubt you mean well; but you can't help me."

"I can pray for you."

"Carr, do you pray?"

"Yes;" and the earnest face grew still more earnest. "I can, and do pray. Else, how could I live?"

The two young men were standing at the corner of a retired street, during the last of this conversation, and John Carr was about bidding his companion good-night, when he saw the man who had been called a scoundrel, coming toward them. "There he is, again."

"Yes; the villain! I wish to heaven I could be rid of him. He will drive me to desperation. Come to my room if you've nothing better to do. He is waiting to see me alone." Another bow, with a smile which was meant to be insinuating, and the scoundrel passed them. "I believe he is the devil in disguise, and a thin disguise, too," said Jefts, in a low tone.

They walked on in silence, until their destination was reached. Jefts unlocked the door of his room, the air of which was foul with the fumes of tobacco and liquor. "Horrid, isn't it?" he exclaimed, throwing open the windows, and clearing a chair, which he offered to his guest. "I had forgotten things were so bad, or I wouldn't have asked you to come here. I don't suppose you'll wonder at my headaches, after this."

"I wonder that you can live," was the frank reply. "How can you?"

"Oh, I've got used to it. We all have to." This was said with affected carelessness; but the speaker was in no mood for trifling, as his next remark proved. "Now, Carr, we are alone, and the door is locked. I believe my head is tolerably clear, too; and if you have no objections to talking, I should like to know what made you come my way to-night, instead of going to your boarding-place."

So much depended upon the reply to this, that time was taken for consideration.

- "Do you wish me to tell you the truth?" at length asked John Carr.
- "Yes," and there was such intensity of expression in this single affirmative, that it needed no repetition.
- "Because I thought you were unhappy, and I longed to do something to help you. I didn't like to intrude myself upon you, but there was no other way; you wouldn't

ask me to walk with you. I couldn't sleep last night, for thinking of you; so I prayed that your heart might be inclined to me."

"Have you a father and mother, Carr?"

"No, I am an orphan. My mother died about four months ago."

"Have you any sister?"

"No; neither brother nor sister. I am alone in the world. Mr. Lewis was very kind to me, when I was a poor, lame boy; and that is why I came here to work for him. Everybody has been kind to me."

"And you have been kind to yourself," said Albert Jefts. "I am an orphan; but I have a little sister who loves me better than all the world beside. If it hadn't been for her, you wouldn't have seen me in the store to-day. Look there," and he pointed to a vial marked "Laudanum." "I intended to drink that last night, but the thought of Daisy prevented me."



"Why, you would not kill yourself." Page 139.

Relief and partition and the will be right Lead a solf threat salk at the attention adoe Complete Control was a control burning state of "Why! you wouldn't kill yourself!" cried John, in a tone of horror.

"I wished to kill myself," was the cool reply. "It would have been the best thing for me; but little Daisy would miss her darling brother, and bad as I am, I couldn't leave her. I do need a friend," was added after a short pause. "But I don't see how you could help me, even if I should tell you all."

For the next quarter of an hour, only sobs were heard in that room. Not a word was spoken until John Carr said solemnly, "Let us pray." Kneeling, he urged that all sins might be forgiven, and all sorrowing hearts comforted. He prayed, too, most earnestly for the friend whose path was beset with dangers. "Do trust me," he said to this friend, when he rose from his knees.

"I will," was the welcome response.

"God has sent you to me."

Hour after hour went by; and still the two remained in close consultation. No one was admitted, although there were several calls for Mr. Jefts. At first he talked, while his companion only listened. He told his story; the story of thousands of the young men of our country, differing perhaps in its details, yet the same in substance. Wine drinking and card playing had been his ruin. Moderate drinking created an appetite which demanded gratification. Small sums of money were staked to give zest to the game of cards. The fact that he had an income, independent of his salary, made him a desirable companion for such as waste their time in riotous living.

Lower and lower he had fallen, until in an evil hour, maddened with liquor, and a sense of his own degradation, he staked his entire property. A professional gambler, with the manners of a gentleman, won the game, yet with rare generosity, allowed him one more opportunity to retrieve his fortune. Again he lost, to find himself in the power of one, merciless as the grave, and more cruel than death.

Never, in all his downward career, had he wronged his employers. His keen sense of honor, which dissipation had not destroyed, prevented this. But now he must have money, and trusting to his previous honesty to screen him from suspicion of intentional wrong, he had delivered the goods of which complaint was made. If the goods were accepted, as according to contract, he intended, in some way, to secure the profits of the transaction. But this scheme failed, in the outset, and as he told John, he was thankful that it did, let come what might; adding, "I have no doubt that I should have betrayed myself before I was through with it.

"Now, I have told you all, and you can't

help me. That scoundrel has me fast, soul and body; and there is no way of escape. You can't help me, Carr. I know you would, if you could. I don't think I'd have told any one else."

How John Carr longed for the presence and aid of Dr. Manson. Then he thought of his employer, and said, "Go to Mr. Lewis, and tell him all about it. He can help you."

"And so lose my place. Indeed, I can't do that. You don't suppose he'd ever trust me again."

"I think he would," replied John. "I am sure he would," was added, directly. "Let me tell him."

"I can't, I can't!" exclaimed Albert Jefts. "Don't ask me to do that. Carr, I charge you, as you hope for heaven, never taste of wine. It has rnined me. Oh, Daisy, darling, if it were not for you, I would end my wretched life this very night."

"And are you prepared to die?" asked his companion, with streaming eyes.

"Prepared to die! Prepared to die!" repeated the wretched man. "For God's sake, don't ask me such a question. I am prepared for nothing. Tell me what to do."

"Promise me never to touch wine or cards again, while you live, and ask God to help you keep the promise."

"Bless you for saying that, Carr. I'll make the promise, and do my best to keep it. But you don't know what I have to fight against," he added, after a short pause. "It's of no use; I should only perjure myself, and I've enough to answer for already. I can't give up drinking. Let me go my own way, Carr. It won't be long, and there isn't enough good left of me to be worth saving."

But John was not thus to be dismissed. Having found the way to the heart of his companion, he continued to plead, until the desired promise and permission were given. Prayer consecrated new resolutions, and hope once more illumined a pathway, beset with danger.

CHAPTER IV.

The ways diverge; one path is wide,
With flashing lights on every side,
Whose fitful gleams but half reveal
The dangers darkness would conceal;
Yet still moves on the careless throng,
With laugh and jest and mirthful song.

NLY the servants were astir in the house, when a rap on the door of his room roused Warren Lewis from his morning slumbers. "What is wanted?" he asked.

"I wish to see you," was the reply.

"Oh! Johnny, is it? I will see you in a minute;" and wondering much what could have brought him at so early an hour, Mr. Lewis admitted the visitor. "Any trouble, Johnny?"

"Yes, sir; I came to talk with you about Mr. Jefts. He is in trouble, and thinks there is nobody to help him; but I told him you could," was the straightforward reply. "I know you would be kind, as you always are. You won't send him off, will you?"

"Not unless he has done something for which I ought to dismiss him."

"But if he has done wrong, and is sorry for it, you won't send him off. You know we all do wrong, sometimes, Mr. Lewis."

"Yes, Johnny, I know it, and I'll remember it. But I don't know what Jefts has done yet. Did he send you to me?"

"No, sir, I begged him to let me come. I have been with him ever since we left the store, last night."

"Hav'n't you been to your boarding place?"

"No, sir, I couldn't leave Jefts, and I didn't care for anything to eat."

"And hav'n't you eaten anything since you left the store?"

"No, sir, but no matter about that. I want you to treat Jefts just as you would treat me, if I was in his place. He has no father or mother; only a little sister, who would be so grieved, if he was disgraced. You will help him, wont you?"

"I will do all in my power to help him," said Mr. Lewis, seriously. "Now, tell me what help he needs." John commenced speaking; but was soon interrupted. "I wish you would send Jefts to me. Tell him to come, and we can have everything settled before night. That rascally gambler shall give up every claim he has upon him. And Johnny, you go home and get some breakfast. Mrs. Barton will be anxious about you."

Albert Jefts was in an agony of suspense, during the absence of his friend. One moment he hoped, the next he despaired. Now ruin stared him in the face, then, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, he looked for-

ward to a happy, honorable life. Everything depended upon an interview he regretted, so soon as he was left alone. But the first glance at John's face reassured him, and preparing to answer the summons of Mr. Lewis, he said, "I am going to tell the whole truth and accept my fate. Nothing can be worse than what I have suffered the last week. If I am not in the store to day, come here this evening."

"Yes, but I am sure you will be in the store," was the cheerful reply. "I am going with you to see that you find the way." He went to the door of Mr. Lewis' room, waited to see that the young man was cordially received, and then hurried to his boarding place.

Albert Jefts made a full confession of his misdeeds; keeping back nothing, palliating nothing. "I don't suppose you'll want me in the store any longer," he said, with great

effort, after waiting in vain for some response to his communication.

"I wouldn't have you leave, upon any account," answered Mr. Lewis. "Excuse me. I was considering how to deal with Romney. We must find a way to get back your notes, and save your property."

"And are you going to forgive my dishonesty?"

"Certainly. You were sorely tempted, and we are none of us perfect. Never mention it to me again. I shall trust you in the future, as I have in the past. Come into the store, this morning, as usual; that is, if you are able to come. You are not looking well. Take a glass of wine. It will do you good."

"No, sir. I have promised never to taste of wine again. It has been the curse of my life."

Mr. Lewis stayed his hand at this, saying,

"Then you do well to abstain from it. It has never injured me. When it does, I shall follow your example. Did you fast last night?"

"Yes, sir, but I never thought of it. I was too wretched to care for eating. I don't care for breakfast, either."

"But you must eat, nevertheless. When did you see Romney?"

"Last evening. He passed me on the street three times, and came to my room afterwards; but I wouldn't admit him. He wishes to leave town, and is anxious for a settlement."

"Tell me where to find him, and I will settle with him, if you will give me authority."

The merchant's sympathy was strongly enlisted for his clerk, at the same time that his sense of justice was outraged by the conduct of Romney, the gambler. Asking

neither pledge nor promise, he counseled moderation and temperance. His companion would go further. Abstinence and temperance should be synonomous terms. Moderation should be constant self-denial.

"I'll not dispute the point with you," said Mr. Lewis. "If you err, it is on the safe side; and every man must judge for himself. If total abstinence is necessary for you, you will do well to abide by it."

"It is necessary for me; and begging your pardon, Mr. Lewis, I think it is necessary for most people," was the reply.

As may be imagined, Albert Jefts cared no more for eating than he did the previous evening. Yet he made his appearance at the breakfast table, and thus avoided disagreeable questions. He restored his room to something like order, congratulating himself that his supply of liquor and cigars was exhausted. On his way to the store he

countermanded an order given the previous day; and then felt that he was fairly committed to an entire change of habits.

In his sorrow and remorse he had hardly thought of what this change might cost him. The battle with his appetite, the ridicule of old companions, the lassitude which would be sure to oppress him;—all these he had forgotten. Morning, noon, and night, there would be the restless craving for an accustomed stimulant. How long the torment might endure, he knew not. Days, weeks, and months might go by, and he never at rest.

It did not occur to him, however, that he could perjure himself; that he could, at any moment, turn back to the old way. His pledges had been made too solemnly for this. There was only one path for him, if so be, God should spare his life.

In his walk, he encountered John Carr, who said, cheerfully, "You are early, this morning."

"Yes. There is a great deal to be done at the store to-day, and I told Mr. Lewis I would do the work of two. He is to be away part of the forenoon."

"And everything is all right, Jefts?"

"All right," was the response. "Sometime, I will tell you more."

Before night, there was more to tell. Mr. Romney had been visited, and induced to relinquish his claims against Albert Jefts. At first, he refused to do this; but finding himself confronted with the law, he made a virtue of necessity, and at parting bowed politely, expressing the hope that his friend, Mr. Jefts, would be satisfied with the arrangement. Alone, he ground his teeth in impotent rage, vowing vengeance upon those who had thus outwitted him.

"You must be on your guard," remarked Mr. Lewis to his clerk, after reporting his success. "Romney is an unscrupulous villain. He'll have his eye on you, and if you fall into his clutches again, he'll not allow you to escape."

"I shouldn't deserve to escape," answered
Jefts, in a husky voice. "How can I ever
repay you for saving me from him this once?
I could go down on my knees to thank you."

"No! No!" exclaimed Mr. Lewis, his own voice faltering, as he prevented his companion from falling at his feet. "Give me your hand, and let us be friends for life."

Did Warren Lewis think of danger, that evening, when, after draining one glass of rich, red wine, he denied himself the second, which his appetite craved? Did the possibility that this appetite might, one day, become his master, suggest itself? If so, he banished the thought, as unworthy of one who held his destiny in his own hand. He knew how his cousin, Dr. Manson, would regard him; but this cousin was over-scrupulous.

Yet not more so than John Carr, who, having commenced a good work with his fellow clerk, resolved to persevere. Temptation which could not be avoided, must be met and resisted; but it is no part of wisdom to court temptation. At the instance of his newly-found friend, Albert Jefts decided to withdraw himself from the influences which had surrounded him, and Mrs. Barton consented to receive him into her family.

No secret was made of the reasons which induced him to make this change; and sneer as they might, not one of his acquaintances but honored him for abandoning a career which tended to ruin.

"Let him go," said one, with a mocking laugh. "There are enough of us left. He always fetched up in the middle of a jollification, declaring he had gone far enough. For my part, I think we are well rid of him. Spent most of his money, if I'm any judge. Romney got a good share of it."

"I'm sorry if he did," said another, with an oath. "Jefts is too good a fellow to be fleeced by that scoundrel. He was the best of us all; but I can't say I'm sorry he's left us. There are enough of us to go to the devil, without him. Let us drink to his success. May he never taste wine, while grapes grow and water runs."

A strange sentiment was this, for such a company; but the more incongruous, the more jolly; and nothing could have been received with greater favor. Yet scarcely had the empty glasses rung upon the table, when one ventured to prophecy that Jefts would be with them at their next meeting.

"Don't you believe it?" was the exclamation, in reply. "He ain't made of that kind of stuff. I've seen him. But what need of telling? You'll find out what he'll do. There ain't one of us can begin to match him, where will is concerned. He'd

die before he'd drink again; and I wish I had the pluck to follow his example."

This last remark was greeted with strong expressions of dissatisfaction. A second desertion from their ranks could not be borne; and loud were their songs in honor of the jolly god at whose shrine they worshipped. "A short life, and a merry one," they shouted, little dreaming of the woe pronounced upon those who tarry long at the wine; and seeing not the hand-writing on the wall, which doomed one of their number to an early and sudden death.

Scarce two weeks from this time, he whose laugh rang loudest, and whose glass was oftenest drained, in a fit of intoxication, missed his footing, and falling a great distance, was crushed out of the very semblance of humanity. "A sad providence," this death was called? but it was a providence for which the victim himself was account-

able. Such suicides are frequent in our land: — how frequent, will be known only when all secrets are revealed.

Oh, who will sound the note of warning, which echoing from headland to mountain peak, sweeping from the bleak fields of the north to the fair savannas of the south, shall rouse us, as a people, to a sense of our danger!

Often was Harry Manson moved to such a cry as this. Often did his heart stand still, for very horror, at the crime and misery wrought by the demon of intemperance. In high life and low life, in stately mansion and crumbling hovel, were traces of its presence. Still, men talked of moderation, self-control, and manly freedom, as opposed to abstinence and conscientious regard for the good of community.

As a physician, Dr. Manson saw the skeleton in many houses; sometimes concealed by heavy folds of damask, and silken drapery; and sometimes, alas, hidden only by such flimsy screen as woman in her poverty and degradation might interpose. Wherever he went, he was the champion of temperance; using authority, where this was fitting, and persuasion when he had no other resource. In his home, his father's house, he was as ever its pride and joy, although each day renewed his sense of personal bereavement.

His brothers, emulating his virtues, gave promise of usefulness in their chosen vocations. Uncle John Lewis said Paul was a "perfect treasure," and sure to be a successful merchant. George, too, was winning his first laurels. And the sisters. Harry said they were the dearest in the world; and he, surely, had some opportunity to know whereof he affirmed.

To Mrs. Lewis, they were as daughters, seldom a day passing when her lonely house

was not gladdened by their presence. "I believe I shall adopt you," she said, during one of their visits.

"But, auntie, then there will be no girls at home. What would father and mother and brother Harry do without us?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "I was thinking only of myself. I wish Warren had been contented to stay with his father;" and this wish, so often expressed, was supplemented with a sigh.

She could not sympathize with her husband's ambition that their son should amass a princely fortune. She cared little for this, if he might be but good and true; and knowing his habits, it was not strange that she wished him near her.

"But he writes you so often," suggested Nellie.

"And such nice, long letters," added Mary.

"Then John always speaks of him, in his

letters to Paul. You know he can make money so much faster there, than he can here. Why, auntie, I think it is almost the best thing in the world to have just as much money as you want to do good with. Cousin Warren can help all the poor people, when he gets rich."

"Yes, child," answered Mrs. Lewis, cheerfully. "But rich men are not always generous."

"I know it, auntie; but we expect cousin Warren will be generous. John says he is just as kind as he can be."

"And John knows of course. You don't suppose that boy could be mistaken, do you?"

"Not in this case," replied Mary with a blush. "I should trust his judgment."

"Yes, dear, and I hope it will never fail himself, or you."

John Carr had a strong incentive to make the most of his opportunities. There was no engagement of marriage between Mary Manson and himself; but each had looked into the other's heart, and seen the idol, there enshrined. The doctor, too, had a shrewd suspicion of there mutual love; and smiled approval, although he had not been consulted.

The fact that John's mother had been a poor woman, and himself, at one time, the recipient of charity, was counted no disgrace by those who knew his true nobility of character. In his present position, he might have ignored the past; but whenever a poor child needed encouragement, he was ready to tell of his own privations and struggles. Albert Jefts heard his story; wondered at his indomitable energy, and admired his firm principle.

"I have wasted so many years!" said this young man, with a sigh. "And yet they never leave me. I could almost welcome

death to rid me of them," he added, in a lower tone. "You have no ghosts to haunt you Carr. Thank God for that. I never thought to come to this. I remember how my father talked to me, before he died; urging me to be a Christian, and do my whole duty in the world. Mother, too, dear mother,—how she loved and trusted me. Do you know, Carr, I never tried to deceive her but once in my life. I am thankful for that. I was so wretched, then, I thought I should never be happy again."

It was in one of the dark hours that these thoughts claimed utterance; but presently, light shined through the darkness. Mr. Jefts did not need to be reminded of his pledge, or urged to its fulfillment. After a few days of intimacy, his friend never doubted his integrity of purpose or strength of will; but there was often need to rouse him to a more cheerful view of life.

In the store, his services were invaluable, and gradually the look of dissipation faded from his face. His old companions, despairing of his return to former habits, avoided him. Mr. Lewis took occasion to express gratification at the change in his appearance, and the young man, having at heart the best interests of his employer, replied, "I have gained much, since I abandoned my cups. Nothing could induce me to go back to the old slavery. I am ready to join Carr, in preaching total abstinence."

"Preach away," was the laughing response. I am not going to discourage you. If there is any one to be pitied, it is the slave of appetite; and too many of our young men are bound, hand and foot. Some who were my class-mates in school, might better be dead than as they are."

Warren Lewis' first visit home, was made sooner than he had anticipated. He could

leave his business in good hands, and there were many whom he desired to see. Perhaps pride had something to do with this; for he had prospered beyond his most sanguine expectations, and received the congratulations of his friends, with the air of one accustomed to success.

A little slow seemed the familiar city, as he contrasted it with the hurry and bustle he had left. "Come out west and wake up," he said to one and another. "There is room enough this side the Rocky Mountains, and you will breathe freer than you can here."

"But you get your growth here," remarked Mr. Jewett, smiling at the enthusiasm with which the west was extolled. "You had your training in the east."

"Yes, sir; but I'm fast getting westernized," was the reply. "Western society is the progressive element in our body politic, and sure to make its mark."

"Perhaps so. I've no wish to disparage any part of our country; but if moderation don't come with age, there'll be shipwreck somewhere. Don't go too fast yourself; and don't persuade all the young men to leave us. I didn't think it very neighborly when you sent for John, though Paul fills his place. They are both fine young fellows."

"Yes, sir; and John's business tact will make his fortune."

"Something more than tact, there," said the elder man. "Johnny is as straight-forward and honest as the sun. Dr. Manson has had a good deal to do with the making of his character; and the doctor understands such business."

"Yes, sir. Hal is a splendid fellow, with a wonderful knowledge of human nature; but this would be a queer world, if everybody adopted his notions."

"It would be a blessed good world," re-

sponded Mr. Jewett. "People could go to Heaven on their own merits. I wish all the doctors in the country were like him. He prescribes for soul and body."

Warren had the most profound respect for his cousin; yet it was but natural that he should stigmatize as "notions," principles so opposed to his own practice. He knew better than any one else, that his habits, so far from improving, had deteriorated. There was much in his daily life which Hal would condemn.

He expected remonstrance and rebuke, when they should meet; but not a word of either was spoken. The most cordial greeting, the most affectionate interest, but no warning. The cousins met in company, where one drank wine without the apparent notice of the other; and at no time during this visit did the doctor obtrude his "peculiar notions." Too wise to do this, when they

were sure to be disregarded, he trusted that his silence would be rightly interpreted, as indeed it was.

"Hal thinks me incorrigible," said Warren Lewis to himself, with some bitterness of feeling. "But I will show him that my doctrine is as good as his. I can drink moderately. I will drink moderately." Strange that he should think it necessary so often to repeat his resolution.

Mr. Lewis, senior, was gratified with the attentions and compliments bestowed upon his son; assuring his wife that they were two of the most fortunate people in the world. "Plenty of money, good children, and nothing to trouble us. By this time, you are ready to give up worrying about Warren," he said, with a smile which bespoke his own confidence.

"I must leave him with God," she answered, seriously.

Much the same she had said to her son, as they talked of the future, refraining from an expression of her deep solicitude. Was he not self-accused, as he stooped to kiss the quivering lips of this Christian mother, knowing as he did that his welfare was dearer to her than her own life!

The short visit was soon ended. The young merchant turned his face westward, impatient for the excitement of business. Reaching his destination, he found that nothing had been neglected during his absence. There were no mistakes to be rectified, no discrepancies to be explained.

"I might as well have remained away longer," he said, laughingly. "I don't see that I am needed. Everything in order, and none of you looking overworked. Made good sales, too. There is nothing like having faithful clerks."

"Temperate clerks," suggested John Carr, quickly.

"Well, temperate clerks, if you like that better," replied Mr. Lewis, pleasantly, although manifesting some annoyance. We all believe in temperance."

"Yes, sir; and we must practice it." John Carr was privileged.

"You were rather severe, considering that Mr. Lewis allows himself to use liquor," said Albert Jefts to his friend, that evening.

"I only spoke the truth," answered John.
"We are temperate, and we ought to be temperate. I wish he never would taste of liquor again; though I don't suppose there's any danger of his being a drunkard. If I thought there was, I'd beg of him to make the same promise we have."

"There is no danger of his being a drunkard, at present," replied Jefts; and here the conversation was interrupted.

Soon after his return, there were rumors that Warren Lewis devoted himself to a

young lady, who was spending a few weeks in the city with some friends. Absorbed in business as he had been, he now found time to pay her the most assiduous attention, and there was reason to believe that his bachelor days were numbered. Some real or fancied resemblance to Sadie Manson, first attracted him, and made him desire an acquaintance with the lady in question.

Marion Gregory was a lovely girl, gentle and affectionate, yet possessing the elements of a strong character, which might, or might not be developed according to circumstances. Accustomed to defer to her parents on all occasions, secure in their love and consideration, she knew little of the doubts and trials which sometimes perplex those who act more independently. She had seen little of society, in the common acceptation of that term, and was, therefore, in danger of accepting as genuine whatever might please her fancy.

Mr. Lewis was endorsed by her friends. He was an enterprising merchant, honorable and respected, an eligible match for any young lady.

"You may think yourself a happy girl, if he asks you to be his wife," said one of Marion's cousins, when Warren Lewis was under consideration. "He is a general favorite, and besides, he comes of a good family; so there's no danger of being mortified by outlandish relatives. His father is a fine man, as I know, and he says himself, that his mother is the flower of the family."

Marion made no reply to this; yet one who saw her blushing face would not have attributed her silence to indifference. "I declare, I believe he has offered himself, already. Has he, Marion?"

[&]quot; No."

[&]quot;Then he ought to," was the mental rejoinder.

The gentleman had no reason to fear a rejection of his suit; yet whenever he thought of asking Marion Gregory to be his wife, he felt a distrust of himself, which was entirely new. She was pure and unsuspecting. Was he worthy to take her life into his keeping?

She, at least, believed him worthy; and without fear or misgiving, accepted him as the arbiter of her destiny. Her parents must be consulted; but this was a mere form, as they could not fail to be pleased with their daughter's choice. The course of true love flowed smoothly. No one objected to the match, unless it might be some who envied the parties.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were delighted at the prospect of their son's marriage, the latter considering this nothing less than a positive assurance of ultimate success. He reasoned that Warren's wife would be so wise as to know the right, and so judicious as to influ-

ence her husband. "Warren will hear to his wife," he said, cheerfully.

"I hope so," was the reply of Mrs. Lewis, who understood the disposition of her son far better than did his father.

"I know he will, wife. Haven't I always heard to you? Generally, I mean," he hastened to add. "Don't I know that I am indebted to you for being what I am, and haven't I told our boy so a hundred times?" Mr. Lewis said this looking lovingly into the brown eyes, which were growing misty with tears, at length exclaiming, "There, now, what have I said wrong?"

"Nothing wrong, John. I only hope our boy will be as kind a husband as you have been."

Mrs. Lewis seldom addressed her husband as John, and when she did so address him, it was the signal for what he termed "a general break-down" on his part. It made him

young again, and he must needs caress and pet her, as he had done in the days of their courtship. Perhaps it was this which kept the love ever warm in his heart, and made him so kind and tender a husband.

Warren's letters home were more frequent than ever, despite the care of a rapidly increasing business, and the new interests which engrossed his attention. He had so much to say to his mother. He wished he could see her, and talk over his plans. He was going to have a home, keep house, and so start fair in married life. Marion preferred it, as well as himself.

When the wedding day was appointed, invitations were forwarded to many friends; but as the happy pair would go east, directly after their marriage, it was thought best to await their arrival. John Carr had written to Paul Manson that they would all love Miss Gregory, so they were prepared to welcome Mrs. Lewis most cordially.

Warren Lewis was very proud of his bride, as he presented her to his relatives, and saw the admiration they did not care to conceal. His father adopted her at once with such hearty kisses as made her look shyly at her husband, who said, laughing, "All right, my dear. You will get used to father's kisses. He has been in practice a good many years."

"Yes, sir, I have," replied father, rubbing his hands. "I intend to keep in practice, too, as long as I live. Thank God, I've a wife of my own to kiss;" which fervent ejaculation put everybody in the best possible humor. Uncle Manson's family were next in consideration to the immediate home circle, and with them the new cousin was affectionately received, and Warren warmly congratulated. Others beside himself saw the resemblance between Sadie and Marion, and which the ladies pronounced mutually flattering.

The visit was necessarily short; but Mrs.

Warren Lewis observed some things which she afterwards recalled as worthy of consideration. She knew that her husband drank wine; indeed she had sipped a little herself, to keep him company; but neither at his father's or uncle's, was there wine upon the table. In other places, where wine was furnished, she noticed, also, that no member of either family tasted it.

In her innocence and ignorance, she had never given a thought to the habit of using intoxicating liquors, except when moved by some exhibition of drunkenness. Mrs. Lewis, senior, wished to speak of it, but fearing the effect, decided to keep silence. One of the sisters, however, did say, in a tone of affected carelessness, "Allow no rival in the wine cup. Lay your commands upon Warren, if need be."

The young wife asked no explanation, quite unable to comprehend the strange words.

"I only mean that you must warn him against too free indulgence in wine," was the reply. "We believe in total abstinence."

"I to warn my husband," thought Marion Lewis. "Was he not stronger, wiser, and more experienced than she. In short, was he not her superior? Was she not to trust him in all things, finding her whole happiness in loving and being loved? No question of rights or responsibilities had ever disturbed the even tenor of her life. She had promised to obey, without one consideration of the promise; knowing only that her whole life was gladly merged in that of another. Lay her commands upon her husband! Never! Presume upon her own judgment, in opposition to his! This was simply preposterous. He was to be the guide of her life, and the rule of her obedience. The strongest antireformer could have taken no exceptions to her ideas of wifely duty: - or, rather, to the

vague sentiment which is so often mistaken for an intelligent and positive idea.

Only a moment did she think of the remarks which had been made. Her husband claimed attention, and she forgot all else in her admiration of him.

Dr. Manson was studying her character closely; not because he believed the responsibility of his cousin's life to be in her hands, but because he wished to know how far she could be made to depend upon herself. Warren Lewis had committed himself to a definite course of action, long before Marion Gregory had crossed his path. A bad woman might precipitate his career; yet a good woman would find it difficult to effect any material change. Fortunately, for her present peace, his wife did not dream that any change was desirable.

"You are going to see your Aunt Ellen," said Mr. Lewis, to his son, when the latter

had been speaking of an immediate return to the west.

"I believe I must," was the reply. "I should like to have Marion see Holcombe, and I wish to go there too, myself. Uncle Paul and Aunt Ellen were very kind to me, when I was there. I feel under great obligations to them, whenever I think of them. And Ellis,—how good and patient he was. He is going to be somebody, after all."

"Yes, indeed," answered Mr. Lewis. "He will be one of the first in his line. So the doctor says, and he is a good judge. Ellis has been here part of two winters, and everybody liked him. Why, he has lectured already; and only twenty years old. That is doing pretty well. You wouldn't mind his lameness now, when he walks slowly. The doctor says he will grow stronger, too."

"And the doctor is good authority," was the laughing response. "I hear him quoted wherever I go." "And you'll continue to hear him quoted.

That's my mind. I am proud every time
he calls me uncle. I guess I think enough
of my own boy, too."

"I reckon you do, father. I never was jealous of Hal; and it would be foolish to commence now, when I am having everything my own way. There is room enough for us both in the world."

"And would be if you had both settled at home. Your mother aint quite suited to have you so far off; but she'll feel better about it, now you've got a good wife. Nothing to fear for him," thought the father, as his son went out of the room.

Not long after this, Dr. Manson met him, and stopping to speak, was made aware that he had been drinking wine. Some expression betrayed this knowledge, and Warren Lewis hastened to explain. "The fact is, Hal, I called on a friend, and we had a pleasant

chat over a glass of wine; or rather, over two glasses. I should know that look on your face, if I should see it in Batavia. I've seen it too often in the days of auld lang syne."

"So often, that you never wish to see it again."

"Well, to tell the truth, I don't. But I hope to see you a thousand times. Give yourself a little rest and take a look at our great country. Here you have plodded away until you are growing old before your time."

"Am I?" was the smiling reply. "Then I trust I am growing old in a good cause. How soon do you leave us?"

"To-morrow, I think. I have decided to go to Holcombe, and my business needs attention; although Jefts and Carr are very efficient."

The doctor knew of Jefts; of the straits in which he had been placed, and of his re-

form. John Carr had written a long letter, giving account of this friend and asking some advice. Indeed, Albert Jefts was indebted to Dr. Manson for counsel, which had proved of great value.

"How soon will John come this way?" was asked, in response to the merchant's last remark.

"I have no means of judging. He often speaks of his friends here; but he seems well contented, and anxious to learn all he can of business. He is genuine. No sham about him. A little too serious, perhaps; but he enjoys being serious."

"He has had a serious life for one so young."

"Yes, and it's not strange that he remembers it. My sympathies were never so moved for any one, as they were for him the first time I saw him. It seemed almost wicked that a child should suffer so."

"It was wicked," said the doctor, decidedly.

"There was a cause for John's suffering.

His father was a drunkard; and the sins of fathers are visited upon the children. No man sinneth to himself alone."

"Hal managed to preach a sermon after all," mentally ejaculated Warren Lewis, as he walked on. "I knew he would, though I couldn't tell how. Pity he couldn't be a little more liberal."

Holcombe came next; and there stood Aunt Ellen on the piazza, looking much as she had years before, when she waited for two school boys, who were sure to receive from her a smiling welcome. "My wife, Aunt Ellen," said a familiar voice; and Marion Lewis was welcomed with the cordiality to which she was accustomed.

A rare specimen of moss was brought to Ellis, yesterday, and he persuaded his father to go with him in search of more this afternoon," said Mrs. Farley, when her guests were seated in the parlor. "They expected to return before you would arrive."

"We shall excuse them," answered Mr. Lewis. "Is Ellis as enthusiastic as ever?"

"I believe he grows more enthusiastic every day," was the reply. "We were afraid his enthusiasm would overtax his strength; but there seems little danger, now."

"I hear a good report of Ellis. I can hardly realize that the helpless boy I used to see here, has grown to be so fine a scholar. He must be careful not to overtax his strength, and so miss the goal of his ambition. Our country can boast of but few who have distinguished themselves in the path he has chosen. Why, my dear, this cousin of ours counts every stone a gem," added the speaker, turning to his wife, who had taken no part in the conversation. "Aunt Ellen, do you think that an exaggeration?"

Before a reply could be made, Professor Farley and his son were seen coming up the walk. "I am sorry not to have been at home to receive you," said the former, after the first greetings were exchanged. "Ellis would follow the boy who undertook to find some curious mosses; and the way was longer than we expected. I hope we shall be excused for our seeming want of courtesy."

Of course, the apology was accepted; Warren Lewis asking in what direction they had been.

"Out by the old hermit's house; and from there across the fields to that strip of woodland which runs north and south. We rode to the house, and made the rest of the distance on foot."

"And quite a tramp you have had. Is that old house standing now? The first time I saw it, it looked ready to fall."

"Yet it stands, though time and weather

have done their work upon it. It will last many years longer if left to the natural course of decay."

"Does any one live in it?"

"No; Mr. Wolcott was its last occupant.

The present owner gives no attention to it."

"Some people say the house is haunted," added Ellis. "The children of the neighborhood are afraid to go past it after dark. They think the old man stands by one of the windows."

"Do you remember him, cousin Ellis?"

"Perfectly," was the reply. "I used to think it a rare treat to have Mr. Wolcott come here. To my childish eyes, he was quite a wonder. He ought to be immortalized either with brush or pen."

"And his fate should serve as a warning to all young men;" remarked Professor Farley. "I believe he was the most entire wreck of manhood I have ever seen."

"And what of his relatives?" asked Warren Lewis, anxious to avoid a discussion of the causes of this wreck.

"His sister's death occurred soon after his own, and it was more than two years before there was any settlement of his affairs. Then a nephew came, sold the house, and whatever furniture there was worth removing, was given to the woman who had done Mr. Wolcott's cooking. His books are in my library, and Ellis appropriated some mineral specimens. But I forgot that you were here when he died. You must have known this before."

"I was here when he died," was the reply.

"But there was no disposition made of his effects, at that time, and I have never thought to ask about them since. My interest in him was not so great as the doctor's. Hal was perfectly wild over him, about the time of his death."

"I shall be curious to hear the story of this hermit," said Mrs. Lewis.

"It is too sad for you to hear," responded her husband, kindly. But for all that, she heard the story from Ellis Farley, and pondered much upon it.

Upon their return from this trip, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis found that her father had purchased a desirable house, which he presented to his daughter as a wedding gift. He also provided the means for furnishing it, and arranged for the yearly payment of taxes.

This last, which seemed entirely unnecessary, provoked some discussion between Mr. Gregory and his son-in-law; but the father insisted upon carrying out his original plan. "It is what I always intended to do," he said. "It is part of Marion's portion of my property; and she may as well have it now as any time. If you should be unfortunate in business, you would still have a home."

"But I hope not to be unfortunate," was the reply.

"We all hope so; but the chances of trade may make a man poor, when he least expects it; and it is always pleasant to live in a house of your own."

This could not be denied; and yet if his father-in-law had wished to assist them, the gift of a few thousand dollars to himself would have been more acceptable. Warren Lewis did not say this. He probably would have denied that such was the fact; but that, in some way, he felt injured was very apparent.

Married and established in a home which should be to them the dearest spot on earth, these two commenced a new life. What should this life be? What record would be made by the coming years?

Husband and wife would have answered these questions, confidently; one secure in his own strength, the other trusting a love it would have been impossible for her to doubt. Friends, too, would have answered, confidently. Was he not honorable and upright? Was she not affectionate and true?

CHAPTER V.

Days fly apace. Years come and go,
Each laden with its joy and woe;
Each bearing some new gift of grace,
Or bringing back some pale, dead face,
To haunt the feasts, which love may spread,
And fill the heart with fear and dread.

DECADE of years. Thousands of days, each one numbering its full measure of hours. How long seems the time, in anticipation! How far off seems the tenth anniversary of a marriage, a death, or a victory!

It is well we cannot see the end from the beginning, else should we faint and falter, ere half the race was accomplished. But if, while choice remains to us, some magic hand could,

for a moment, lift the veil which now conceals the future, should we not hasten to retrieve mistakes already made? If we could see the disastrous results of a chosen course of conduct, should we not at once abandon it?

So we think; but certain causes will produce certain effects. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. Yet some, who, in business transactions, are shrewd, far-seeing, and consistent, are strangely at fault in regard to their moral well-being. The weak and ignorant do well to be guarded; but they are above such need. Restrictions and pledges may be necessary for some; but not for them.

Warren Lewis was one who considered himself entitled to freedom, in all things; and certainly, if pecuniary success could give warrant for this, he had some right to claim it. The first year of his marriage was unusually favorable for business. He was prosperous, and his home pleasant.

But in that home was, even now, a cause of difference between husband and wife. Mrs. Lewis was, by no means, what would be considered an advocate of temperance. In her father's house, wine and other liquors were occasionally placed upon the table, and she would not have objected to this, at her own table. She did, however, object to the constant appearance of wine, and at length made some remonstrance.

"And you really care about it," said her husband, smiling, surprised though he was.

"Yes, I do," she replied, earnestly.

"I am sorry if you do," he answered. "I must have a glass of wine, with my dinner. Don't trouble yourself about it, Marion."

This was all. Her first attempt to influence her husband had not been so successful that she would wish to repeat the experiment. She hastened to make amends, as best she might, for having annoyed him ever so slightly.

John Carr and Albert Jefts, with another young man in his employ, were invited to dine with him. Knowing well that wine would be refused by, at least, two of his guests, he offered it as he would have done without this knowledge. One accepted; but in speaking of it afterwards, this young man said the acceptance was a mere act of courtesy, on his part. "I don't care for liquor," he added. "I can drink, or let it alone. I thought Mr. Lewis would be better pleased, if I drank with him."

"I don't really think he was," answered John Carr, frankly. "I advise you, as a friend, not to drink again with him. Jefts and I never drink, under any circumstances. It is against our principles and our pledge; and I am sure Mr. Lewis has more confidence in us, than he would have if he didn't know this."

"But he drinks himself. It is no worse for others than for him."

"I know it. But because he does wrong, there is no reason why we should."

Two years passed, and after repeated invitations, the mother of Warren Lewis decided to visit him. There was a grandchild, a handsome boy, anxious to make her acquaintance, the happy father wrote.

"We must go now, wife," said Mr. John Lewis, when this news was received. "I can leave the store as well as not, and Mary Manson can help you get ready. I shouldn't wonder if she would like to go with us; and I mean to ask John when he calculates to come after her. Everything will go right there."

Mrs. Lewis found the journey very fatiguing; but the welcome she received, compensated for all previous discomfort. If the baby was not anxious to make her acquaintance, he was quite willing to do so; and nothing could have been more pleasant than her first entrance into her son's house.

He was stronger than when she last saw him. "Getting to be solid and substantial," he said, with a laugh. "I am following in father's footsteps, and fancy I look quite fatherly myself."

"I think you do," replied Mr. Lewis, senior. "That boy of yours looks to me worth raising; and I hope he'll live to be as much of a comfort to you, as you are to me. I believe it would have killed me, if you had gone wrong. When I sent you to Holcombe with Harry, I was so anxious about you, I could hardly attend to my business. Now, thank God, I have nothing to trouble me."

At dinner, "grandfather" drank to the health of the child who was to bear his name. "Will you join us, mother?" asked Warren Lewis.

"No, my son," she replied. "You know that I never drink wine, and I am sorry that you do."

"But you see father sets the example," said her son, resolved not to take the matter seriously.

"It looks to me like his yielding to a temptation which you have prepared for him," replied the mother. "We must discountenance this," she added, turning to her daughter-in-law; and then to avoid further discussion, began to speak upon another subject.

She did not, however, thus dismiss a matter which seemed to her of great importance. Alone with her husband, she again brought forward the arguments he had so often heard; with the additional one, drawn from the force of example.

The following day, the elder Mr. Lewis took occasion to repeat this conversation to his son, adding, "I told your mother I wouldn't drink wine again while we are here, and you better not have it on the table."

"But I always have it on the table," was

the reply. "Mother is foolish about this, and I wonder that you allow her prejudices to influence you."

"Warren, do you know that you are talking about your mother; for me, the best woman in the world? Don't ever speak of her again in that way. I don't doubt but she is right about this, though I don't see it in the same light she does. She always has influenced me and she always will."

Seldom did he speak so seriously. The tone of voice in which his son's remarks were made troubled him quite as much as the remarks themselves. It was cold and careless. Warren, seeing that he had offended, made haste to apologize, paying such tribute to his mother's worth, as quite appeased his father. He yielded, also, the contested point, solacing himself with the thought that abstinence at the table did not impose abstinence elsewhere. Having yielded, he was too thoroughly a

gentleman and too dutiful a son to manifest any annoyance at the change.

Mrs. Lewis, or "grandmother," as her husband called her, teazingly, spent most of the time with her daughter-in-law and the baby, assisting in the care of the latter, while giving to the former much advice and instruction, in regard to her new duties.

"It is so pleasant to have you here," said Marion, after one of the long talks, in which each had expressed her thoughts and feelings frankly. "My own mother has not been able to come since baby was born, and I needed some one to advise me. Warren is always kind and good; but sometimes mother seems to me the best friend, after all."

"Yes, my dear, I have thought that, many times. My mother died when I was very young, and I have always missed her. I am glad if I seem to you like a mother. Warren's wife would be sure to find a warm place

in my heart; yet I should be sure to love you, if you were not his wife. I wish you to be happy and satisfied in your life. So many people are unhappy and complaining, wretched themselves, and making others wretched. I wish I could help them all to do better."

"I hope you don't think I am complaining," said Marion, as she drew her chair nearer to the kind woman.

"No, my dear; that description does not suit you. I was thinking of others whom I have known. You seem satisfied with your life."

"Indeed I am," was the reply. "How could I help it? Haven't I the best husband, the dearest baby, and the pleasantest home in the world?"

"I hope you think so," answered the mother. "It is a sad day for any wife, when she thinks otherwise. Her husband may not be best to any one else; but he should be to

her, even though she knows he is far from perfect."

"I thought my husband perfect," said Marion Lewis, smiling and blushing, yet with an undertone of sadness.

"And I know you have learned your mistake, long before this, my dear child. I could have told you that. My love for him never made me blind to his faults."

"I was glad to have you say what you did about wine, the first day you were here," remarked the younger lady after a short silence. "I prefer not to have it upon the table, constantly."

"I prefer not to have it at all. I believe in entire abstinence from everything which can intoxicate, and never allow any kind of liquor upon my table. I know how Warren feels about this, and don't blame you for anything he does," the mother hastened to add. "He is not alone in his opinion; but I know that

I am right. Many young mothers think they need stimulants to keep up their strength, but it is a great mistake: sometimes, a fatal mistake for both mother and child."

"Please tell me all about it," said Marion, looking earnestly into the face of her companion; and Mrs. Lewis being glad to comply with this request, the subject was plainly and intelligently discussed.

Once, during this visit, the mother attempted to remonstrate with her son; reminding him that the new relations he had assumed involved him in new responsibilities. The fact that he lived for others as well as himself, made it obligatory upon him to live at his best.

He listened respectfully, answered kindly, and yet was wholly unmoved. He was sure that he was the best judge of what was right for himself. "If I ever see the necessity of changing my habits, I shall do so," he said.

"I hope you will learn to trust me some day, mother;" and she could only hope that her fears for him were groundless. In his intercourse with business men, Mr. Lewis was more than once tempted to regret the promise of abstinence, which he held himself in sacred honor bound to respect. Yet, when the visit was at an end, he looked back with far more of satisfaction than he could otherwise have done.

John Carr was a frequent guest at the house of his employer, while these dear old friends were there. Welcomed as one of the family, he talked freely of his prospects and plans. His love for Mary Manson was no longer a secret; neither was it a secret that they would be married, whenever he could provide for her a suitable home. To Mrs. Lewis, he confided his doubts and misgivings. He wished to give Mary as good a home as she would leave.

"What do you mean by as good a home?" was asked with a smile. "Do you mean as large a house and as much furniture, or a place where she can be as happy and as tenderly loved as she is now?"

"O Mrs. Lewis, we shouldn't need as large a house as Mr. Manson's."

"I don't think you would," was the reply.

"And I advise you as a friend, to come on and talk with Mary about it. Come to our house and consider yourself one of the family. You have worked too long, and need rest. Warren must spare you a few weeks."

About two months after this, John Cari astonished his eastern friends by appearing among them, when they supposed him far away. Some thought he was so much changed as to need an introduction; but all welcomed him with flattering cordiality. In the store, Mr. Jewett fairly monopolized him; anxious to hear of the west, in general, and his own fortunes, in particular.

"Going to settle out there, sometime, I suppose," said the old merchant.

"Yes, sir, I hope to."

"Well, success to you there, though I think we could have done well enough by you, if you had stayed with us. Don't try to lead away Paul. He is the main-stay of our establishment. Suppose young Lewis is doing a good business."

"Yes, sir. He has a large trade, and a profitable one. There is every prospect of his being a wealthy man."

"That's what I've heard, and I don't see any reason why the prospect shouldn't be realized. He has good habits, and is a shrewd manager. Honest, too, if he is what he used to be."

"No one doubts his honesty," replied John Carr. "His word is as good as his bond, and his clerks are required to follow his example."

Mrs. John Lewis could not speak of her anxiety in regard to her son; but Dr. Manson had no scruples against enquiring of his habits.

"He is not a total abstinence man," was
the answer given. "I wish he was; although
he may never be really the worse for drinking. I mean he may never be a drunkard.
It don't seem possible that he can be; but
I have heard you say that every moderate
drinker is in danger."

"That is true. Every year's observation confirms me in the belief. I should consider any member of our family on the sure road to ruin, if indulging in the use of wine. I never would give Mary to you, if I did not know you to be a teetotaler. My sisters shall not be cursed with drunken husbands, if any foresight of mine can prevent it. I tremble for Warren Lewis and his wife, whenever I think of them."

"They seem very happy," said the doctor's companion. "Mrs. Lewis is a lovely woman, and Mr. Lewis is very much respected. As for his drinking, he only follows the almost universal fashion in our city. Jefts and myself are wonders of temperance, and should be greatly ridiculed, if we were not so independent."

"I believe you were never afraid of ridicule, John."

"No, sir. When I hopped about on crutches, it didn't trouble me to be laughed at. I knew I was doing my best; and so I try to do my best now, let people say what they will. How strange it seems that I should be able to walk and work as I do! But for you, I should have been a miserable cripple all the days of my life. I realize my obligations to you, more and more. Yesterday I went past the old house in which we used to live, and looked up to the window

through which I got my only glimpse of the world; and then all your kindness came back to me. I remember the first time I saw you, and some of the things you said. My gentleman, as I used to call you, seemed to me like an angel."

"I am very far from that," was the reply. "I am only a weak, erring man; yet God knows I wish to do my work in the world, faithfully. It is strange to me that so many forget they are living for eternity. This life is so short and eternity so long, common prudence would dictate a regard for our eternal interests. I have just come from the dying bed of a young man, who has literally killed himself. He is no older than you, and he ought to have lived to a good old age; but his habits have ruined him soul and body. He was beyond the reach of human skill when he sent for me. I have many such cases; but you don't need to hear of them."

With the full approval of her parents and brother, Mary Manson had pledged herself to share the fortunes of John Carr, quite ready to accept an unpretentious home, which should be guarded by love and tenderness. After the above conversation, this home formed the subject of discussion.

"I am sure no one could love Mary more truly than I do," remarked John Carr, with much emotion. "But I often think I am unworthy of her, and wish I had millions of money to lavish upon her, as an expression of my love."

"I don't think she would be any happier for that," replied her brother. "Money is of little value compared with unvarying affection and unswerving integrity. Mary is a true woman, and neither of you will be happier for postponing your marriage until you have acquired a fortune. Not that we are anxious to be rid of Mary," added the doctor after a pause.

"I know you can't be," was the quick response, made with such earnestness as to provoke a smile. "It makes me very humble before God to think he has granted me so happy a life; and I will make Mary happy with me, if my love can accomplish it. You will come out, sometime, and see how we live."

"Indeed I will, John; and now I will leave you, to visit patients."

Everything was settled. Another year, he would claim his bride; and with this hope in his heart, the young man returned to business. Jefts was still with him, although contemplating a change.

"Carr, I wish you would go into partner-ship with me," he said, one evening, when they were together. "I have been thinking about it while you were gone, and I am sure we could do well to set up for ourselves, and not interfere with Mr. Lewis, either. We

could make a speciality of some kind of goods he is anxious to give up, and by perseverance, secure a monopoly of the trade. I ought to do better for myself than any one can do for me; and there is nothing like striking at the right time. What do you say?"

"I say I should like it, if I had the necessary capital," answered Carr. "But I have only a few hundred dollars."

"And a good knowledge of business," added his companion. "That counts for a good deal, in a new undertaking. I will put in what I have, and we will divide the profits fairly. What say?"

"I don't know what to say, Jefts. I am as anxious as anybody, to get ahead in the world."

"Of course you are, and as deserving. I will explain my plan, and then you can tell me what you think of it." The plan was well laid, and not difficult of achievement, provided the requisite energy was applied.

"But Mr. Lewis will hardly be willing to spare us both," said John, after expressing his entire approval and confidence.

"I think he will make no positive objection," was the reply. "He is too fair a man for that. He knows, too, that I have intended setting up for myself, whenever there should be a favorable opportunity. Talk with him about it."

"What! My right hand and my left hand both!" exclaimed Warren Lewis. "That is too much. I knew Jefts would leave me before long; but I calculated on you. I don't see how I can get along without you, Johnny." The old name revived old memories, and a sense of his indebtedness to this friend, for a moment, quite overpowered the young man. "Mind you, I don't say you can't leave," added the merchant, suspecting how it was with John. "I don't intend to be selfish in this matter. I'll consult your best interests,

and some time, before long, I'll have a talk with Jefts."

This settled the matter, and Mr. Lewis, acknowledging that what was decided should be done at once, provided himself with clerks to take the place of those who were to leave. To them he said, "Do as well for yourselves as you have done for me, and you cannot fail to succeed."

There was no interference with his business on the part of the new firm. He was glad to drop some kinds of goods from his list, recommending his customers to patronize an establishment where they would be sure of fair dealing.

In close quarters, doing their own work, and keeping their own accounts, the young men tried their abilities, with no expectation of becoming suddenly rich. They would work their way, steadily and surely; content with small profits, and at first, if need be, with

small sales. Didn't it seem like a fairy tale to John Carr, when he reviewed his past life, and thought of the fairy princess, waiting to share his home?

"Don't think I shall be unhappy, because I cannot live in a palace," wrote Mary Manson to her lover. "We will not have a poor home, even if it is humble. No home can be really poor, where there are love and kindness."

Every one who had known John, rejoiced in his good fortune. His partner and himself were agreed as to all business matters. "A rare partnership," said Mr. Lewis, when speaking of them. "I prefer doing business alone; but they seem animated by the same spirit. Out of the store, they are inseparable; and there is no danger that their friendship will ever change. Fine young men," he added. "A little straight-laced, compared with most others; but erring on the safe side."

Perhaps the speaker thought of himself, as he said this; remembering the entreaties of his wife that he would indulge less freely in the use of wine. Perhaps, too, for a moment, he questioned if it might not be better to heed her entreaties. But presently he banished the thought as unworthy; although he loved his wife, and prided himself upon the fact that she wanted for nothing which money could purchase.

And she? Sometimes she chided herself for the fears which would intrude to mar her happiness. Then, she was ready to believe her husband's judgment so superior to her own, that she must be wrong. She would resolve to be silent upon the disputed point; and so far succeeded that she seemed to forget it.

Not so, however. She observed closely the habits of those whom she met in society. Moreover she remembered the advice of

mother Lewis, and allowed herself no indulgence which could injure her child. Her husband, laughing at her "squeamishness," was obliged to yield, when his mother was quoted as authority. "Hal has been talking to her," he said.

"And the doctor certainly ought to know," was the reply.

"I think he does know almost everything connected with his profession; but like many other wise people, he rides a hobby." This was the manner in which Warren Lewis usually spoke of his cousin, except in the presence of John Carr, when he omitted all qualifying clauses.

A year's experience proved that Albert Jefts had not miscalculated; and having been prospered thus far, the young merchants ventured to assume new responsibilities. They rented a cottage containing two tenements; and each brought a bride to preside

over the small rooms. Daisy Jefts, now a grown young lady, having been left alone by the death of Aunt Desire, came too, and was welcomed by all. There was to be a servant in each kitchen; for so had the gentlemen decided; but Mary Manson, now Mary Carr, insisted upon ruling supreme in her "own kingdom;" and Mrs. Jefts soon followed her example.

Mary's home was very different from that of her cousin Warren, where money was spent without stint. Yet she did not envy Marion Lewis. She saw the restless anxiety which even now began to tell upon the appearance of the young mother, and readily divined the cause. The baby, John Lewis, junior, was a treasure in himself; healthy, handsome and good-humored; well managed and tenderly loved.

"You look like a temperance boy," said Mary to him one day, when he was about two years old. "Temperance boy," he lisped in reply; clapping his hands and laughing merrily.

"I hope he will be a temperance man," said his mother. "I never thought much about temperance, until since he was born. Mother Lewis talked to me when she was here, and I've tried to manage him as she told me. I haven't tasted of wine since she was here, though Warren thinks me too particular and says I need it sometimes. We don't want it, do we, darling?" she added, clasping her child in her arms and covering his face with kisses.

"Mamma cry," was the little fellow's response, wiping away the tears for which she apologized, by saying that she was a little nervous.

Often was this excuse made when tears could not be repressed; and as one after another was added to the number of her loved ones, baby hands still sought to remove the

traces of these tears. At the tenth anniversary of her marriage, she was the mother of four boys. How happy she had been when standing at the altar, she had pledged herself for life to one whom she thought the embodiment of manly perfection. "Poor child!" as mother Lewis said. She had learned her mistake.

Her husband was a wealthy merchant, whose business was well managed, and whose gains were sure. He was respected, honest, and as the world goes, honorable. A genial man, too, accomodating himself to circumstances, he made a host of friends. Hospitable and proud of his family, it was his pleasure to entertain company, both friends and strangers.

He was not disposed to find fault with his wife; but he did wonder that she should so soon have lost the blooming beauty and sprightly manners which had first attracted him. "Marion has changed a great deal," he said to himself, as she passed through the room in which he was sitting. "I wonder—"

But just then he caught a reflection from the mirror opposite. He, too, had changed. His face was full and flushed, his figure far too stout for elegance, and even his hands had a gross, puffy look. He went nearer to the mirror, and took a deliberate survey of himself. "Hal told me the truth," he thought. "I drink too much liquor; I ought to give it up. I made a mistake in the beginning. Simpleton! "he exclaimed, a moment after. "As though I could expect at forty to look like a young man. I have had my day of good looks, and must depend upon something else, now. I've money enough, and there's more to be made. I'm well enough. Hal don't know everything, if he is such a famous doctor; and that glass magnifies wonderfully."

So he comforted himself in regard to his own looks; but the pale, tired face of his wife haunted him. He contrasted it with the beaming countenance of his cousin, Mary Carr, who was far more beautiful, in her matronly grace, than she had been, when she answered to the name of Mary Manson. The comparison was not flattering to Marion Lewis, although her life had been exempt from toil, while Mrs. Carr had done much of household labor.

Mr. Lewis was thinking of this, as his wife again passed through the room in which he was sitting; and he was half inclined to address her upon the subject. It might have been better had she done so; for she did not hesitate now to speak frankly, whenever occasion seemed fitting. Thus far she had her boys under control; but soon,—she dared not think how soon,—they would look to their father's example as the rule of their lives.

They saw the sparkle of the flowing wine, saw their father as he drank it with such avidity as betrayed the cravings of his appetite; and she knew all this could not be without effect.

Yet she never spoke of this. Neither did she complain of the fitful temper of her husband. He protested that he was not injured by the use of alcoholic liquors, because he had never been really intoxicated, and was still a clear-headed business man.

But at forty, a man may well look to his ways, whether they be good or whether they be evil; for in one form or another, retribution is sure, soon, to overtake him. If Warren Lewis was clear-headed, it was only after the morning stimulant, which his system demanded to give it tone, for the business of the day. Infirmities crowded fast upon him; induced, not by hard work, but hard drinking, as Dr. Manson had told him in plain language.

Never intoxicated! It would have been nearer the truth to say that he was never thoroughly free from the influence of liquor. Late at night, early in the morning, at lunch, at dinner, and often with friends, he drained the glass of its fiery contents. Was this moderation? So he claimed, when talking with his cousin, who, notwithstanding the wearing life of a physician, looked quite ten years his junior, and gave no sign of physical weakness. Nothing annoyed Warren Lewis so much as to be reminded of his infirmities, either by the sympathy of his wife, the careless remarks of an acquaintance, or his own feelings.

He wished to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his marriage, and in uncommonly gracious mood, allowed his wife to make all necessary arrangements, without dictation or interference on his part. Left to consult her own wishes, she invited only the families of

Albert Jefts and John Carr, insisting that every member should be present, even the babies. She said, laughingly, that the children would form the most important part of the company, as they certainly did, so far as numbers were considered, counting nine, who seemed to wear their best manners, with their best frocks.

The dinner, too, was according to Mrs. Lewis' taste, without wine. Everything passed off pleasantly; the guests wishing their host and hostess many returns of the happy day.

"Times have changed since I first became acquainted with you," said Mr. Lewis to John Carr. "These youngsters remind us that we must soon make room for them, on the stage of action. I must acknowledge that it makes me feel rather old, to think that I am the father of four boys, growing as fast as mine do."

"I believe I feel younger for being called father," was the cheerful reply. "Mary and I have no idea of being set aside as old people, for a long time to come. We calculate to celebrate our golden wedding in this world if Providence permits. At any rate, we intend to live out the full measure of our days and make each one of them happier than the one preceding. You see we have great expectations."

"Yes, I see, Johnny. That name hardly suits you now."

"I think it does, Mr. Lewis. Mary calls me so, sometimes, and the name pleases me wonderfully."

"You are having a first rate trade this season," was the next remark of the host, addressed to Albert Jefts.

"Yes, sir, better than at any time before," was answered. "We are in a fair way, now, and but for home influence, should

enlarge our housekeeping accommodations, to correspond with those of our business. Mrs. Carr clings to the cottage; and my wife is pretty sure to think as she does. So Carr and I make a virtue of necessity, and submit."

"You needn't imagine that I shouldn't like a large house with all the modern conveniences," exclaimed Mary Carr, coming to her own defence. "To be sure I should like it, just as well as anybody. But we are comfortable where we are; and there is great pleasure in making one's home rich, without being luxurious. Sometime, when we can better afford it, I may perhaps be the mistress of a larger establishment."

"How bright and cheerful cousin Mary is," said Warren Lewis to his wife after their guests had left. "She would make any home rich only with her presence."

"Yes," replied Marion, wearily. "I al-

most envy her constant flow of spirits.

She is a very happy woman."

"I don't see as she has any more to make her happy than thousands of other women," was Mr. Lewis' response. "Of course, her husband loves her, she is provided with all the necessaries of life, and her children are bright and healthy; but you are better off than she, Marion."

"Am I? I have enough of wealth and luxury, and I do believe you love me, Warren."

"Love you, Marion! Have you ever doubted it? I know I am irritable, sometimes, and speak as I ought not to; but it is because I have so much business on my mind, that little things annoy me. I wish you to have everything you can desire, and I shall always love you. Of course I shall."

As he said this, he imprinted a kiss upon her lips; and, alas! revealed the fact that he had indulged in his usual potations, although there had been no wine at dinner. Involuntarily his wife shrank from him, and then, with a sudden effort, returned the kiss.

"How strange you are this evening, Marion!" he exclaimed. "You are tired, and need rest. I have some papers to look over, and you had better retire early."

The merchant went to his library, and did, indeed, examine some papers, although to little purpose. Some influence made him think of Sadie Manson; her beauty, purity, and goodness. What would she say, could she see him now? He had not met her since soon after her marriage; but Mary had received a letter that morning, announcing her intention to visit her western friends. She with her husband were coming in a few weeks.

If he could make an excuse for absenting himself from the city during her visit, some awkward explanations might be avoided. She would look steadily into his face, catching the very light of his eyes, and speaking so earnestly, that he could not but give heed to her words. She would observe the change in his appearance, and too wise to be deceived, would attribute it to the true cause.

He pushed from him the papers which should have received attention, drank a glass of brandy, and through this medium, took a more cheerful view of his condition. He closed his eyes, that he might think more freely, when, like a shadowy phantom appeared the hermit of Holcombe. Not dressed in courtly garb; but as Harry Manson had seen him, just before his death. His long hair seemed swept, ever and anon, by the wind, his pallid face grew luminous, and his tall figure assumed gigantic proportions.

Warren Lewis sprang to his feet, trembling with excitement. Why did the old man thus

confront him? For more than a score of years, Harry Wolcott had rested in a grave on the sunny slope of one of New England's hills. What had he, now, to do with the prosperous western merchant?

With an impatient gesture, and an expression of contempt, Mr. Lewis left the library, wishing he had never heard of the "old vagabond." The very effort to forget the strange appearance, which he knew was but a weird fancy of his own disordered brain, fixed it more deeply in his memory. It haunted him, after he laid his head upon the pillow; and not until the following day, when engrossed in business, was it really forgotten. Had he been truly wise, he would have heeded the warning thus given; but blinded to his best interests, he went on as before.

Mr. and Mrs. Yates, the latter known to my readers as Sadie Manson, came as was expected, and in John Carr's home there was

great rejoicing. The children, charmed with the beautiful lady they were taught to call auntie, were hardly more demonstrative than their father. It was one of the happiest days of his life, when he welcomed his friend and sister to his home.

Cousin Warren, too, having come up from the valley of humiliation, was quite ready to greet the visitors cordially. At his own suggestion, wine was banished from the table whenever they shared the hospitality of his house; although he called himself a coward for thus yielding to a silent influence, when he refused to listen to his wife.

Mrs. Yates did not speak to him of his habits, which were only too apparent, despite the slight effort made at concealment; but with her sister she talked frankly. "Can nothing be done?" was the question she often asked, only to receive the same disheartening reply. "John ought to remon-

strate with him," she said, at length. "He, certainly, might do it."

"He has attempted it several times," answered Mary. "But it is useless. Warren professes to believe that he is not injured, and is impatient of any interference. Harry told him he was killing himself; but that did no good. John thinks he drinks more wine and brandy now, than he ever did before."

"And his wife must bear it," was said in reply. "She looks far too old for her years. I pity her. She cannot be happy."

"No, she cannot." I have seen her when it was impossible for her to make any pretensions to cheerfulness. I know she has many fears for the future; and I long to comfort her. Warren has accumulated property rapidly, and is confident that he shall continue to do so. Reverses would be very hard for him."

"I think of his children," said Sadie.

"Those four boys will soon need a father's training. I must remind him of that before I go, if nothing more. It will be a terrible thing if cousin Warren should add his name to the long list of drunkards. I used to think I had some influence over him, and I must make one effort to save him."

The day this decision was expressed, Mrs. Yates went to the house of her cousin, and meeting him in the hall, averted her face to escape his liquor-tainted breath. Embarrassed at the unexpected meeting, in his present condition, he saw her expression of disgust, and interpreted its meaning.

"I have not been feeling well to-day, so was obliged to have recourse to a stimulant," he said, with some hesitation. "I believe you don't like stimulants. If I remember right, you were fastidious in regard to them."

"And have not changed," was her frank

reply. "I enjoy the fragrance of flowers; but the sickening fumes of liquor are unendurable to me. I wish you were as thorough going a teetotaler, as I am."

"That is not strange," he replied. "We all fancy our own way to be best. But come into the parlor," he added, recovering self-possession. "Marion has gone out, but I will do my best to be agreeable."

"And doubtless you will succeed," responded his cousin, accepting the invitation.
"I must ask you if you really believe what you said a moment ago. Do we all fancy that our way is best?"

"Of course we do," was the quick reply.
"If not, we should change our course. Selfishness would prompt us to that."

"So it would seem. But do you believe that all people do as well for themselves as they might, or even as well as they know? The drunkard knows he is ruining himself, yet refuses to give up his cups; and the moderate drinker knows that abstinence would be better for him; yet he resolutely ignores it. I think you will need to qualify your statement, cousin Warren."

"As you please," he answered, with forced gayety. "I was always ready to acknowledge myself beaten, when we disagreed in the old days; and you have not changed, that I can claim superiority."

"But I have changed," said the lady, seriously. "All these years have not passed without doing their work upon me, as well as you. You and I are not the same as when we last parted. We are placed in different circumstances, with increased responsibilities." The street door opened, and there remained but a moment when she could speak without reserve. Hurriedly she murmured, "Pardon me, cousin Warren, but I must remind you that you are risking the

interests of your own soul, and the happiness of your family, by the use of intoxicating drink. Do look to God for strength, and lead a better life."

Marion Lewis, recognizing the voice of the speaker, entered and bade her welcome, while the host bowed himself from the room, pleading a business engagement.

"Like Sadie," he thought. "Well, I expected something of the kind, and am glad it is over." But it was not over. Her words sounded in his ears wherever he went; and for a time he forgot the specious fallacies with which he was accustomed to deceive himself. Better than any other did he know how near he stood to ruin; yet, strange infatuation! did not amend his ways.

"You are not angry with me, cousin Warren," said Mrs. Yates, as he held her hand at parting.

"No, cousin Sadie," he answered. "I could never be angry with you."

CHAPTER VI.

Ah me! what bitter tears are shed, When mourn the living for the dead; But tears, more bitter, dim the eyes, When gazing with a sad surprise, On one, we counted true and just, Trailing his manhood in the dust.

HE firm of Jewett, Lewis & Co., was still prosperous. Paul Manson, the junior partner, filled the place which had been vacated by his cousin; and realized the fondest expectations of his friends. Uncle John thought him second only to Warren, while others considered him superior.

"Our boy," Mr. Lewis called the merchant, whose shrewd schemes made him conspicuous, even where daring enterprise was the rule.

Talking with his wife, the father allowed himself to dwell, with the greatest complacency, upon "our boy's" success.

"Bids fair to be worth millions," he would say, rubbing his hands.

Mrs. Lewis endeavored to respond heartily to such remarks of her husband; yet he observed that she always offered some qualification. This, however, he attributed to motherly anxiety, and gave it no special consideration.

Often urged to visit her son, she had done so but twice during twelve years of his married life. She preferred seeing him, with his family, in her own home; but when five children claimed the care of her daughter-inlaw, she prepared for a third visit.

Everything was in readiness; but a slight illness prevented their leaving home from one day to another. "Nothing serious. We shall start in a day or two," said Mr. Lewis,

confidently, when asked in regard to the health of his wife.

But to the surprise of all, except the sick woman herself and Dr. Manson, this illness terminated fatally; and instead of welcoming his parents, Warren Lewis received a telegram, announcing his mother's death, and the utter prostration of his father.

"Expect me at the earliest possible moment," he telegraphed, in reply, and took the first train east. No delays occurring, and every connection being made, he arrived in his native city sooner than he was expected.

Excitement and grief, with the fatigue consequent upon such rapid travelling, so effected his nerves, that he found it necessary, as he said to himself, by way of apology, to resort to stimulants. At first, in consideration of circumstances, sparingly; then more freely, until he reached home in a state, which, with some, would have been considered intoxica-

tion. Yet in the general sorrow and sympathy, this was not observed.

His father threw himself into his arms, clinging to his neck, and weeping like a child, while he sobbed out the mother's name in the most endearing terms. They wept together, until, exclaiming, "This is more than I can bear," he rushed frantically from the room, only to be followed by his daughters, who in vain prayed him to be calm. The son, unable to control himself, continued to weep, until Mrs. Manson and Mrs. Farley, who were present, appealed to him, when, with a mighty effort, he repressed his tears.

"It is not strange that your mother's sudden death should move you deeply," continued Mrs. Farley. "It is a severe affliction to us all; but your father needs your support. Everything has been done, without consulting him, and the funeral will take place to-morrow morning, if agreeable to you. The doctor

thought it ought not to be delayed longer; and we depended upon his judgment."

"Couldn't he save mother?" was asked, quickly.

"No human power could save her," was the reply. "I have no doubt that his skill, with the blessing of God, has prolonged her life several years, but she knew her days were numbered."

"Then why did not others know it?"

"Because she preferred they should not. She said it would do no good. Your father would have been wretched, and she was satisfied that the doctor understood her case. He thought she might recover from this attack, until a few hours before her death; and then she desired that no despatch be sent you, while she lived."

By this time, Mr. Lewis returned to his son, who endeavored to comfort him. "You are all good and I love you," said the broken-

hearted man. "But none of you know what my Mary was to me. I would have given up every dollar of my property, and worked like the poorest man to support her, if so I could have purchased her life. O Warren, how can I live without her!"

It was terrible to witness his grief. As friends came in they expressed their sympathy as they had done before, only to be answered with tears and lamentations. At last, came Dr. Manson; and he seemed to have some influence over his uncle.

The greetings between the cousins were short and subdued, yet Warren Lewis shrank from the scrutinizing glance he received; and later when consulted in regard to arrangements for the funeral, was ill at ease.

Asking of his mother's disease, he expressed a regret that he had not known of it, while she was living.

"It would have made you no happier,"

was the reply. "I have made her disease an especial study for years, and I honestly believe nothing could have prolonged her life. We all know we must die; and if our work here is well done, it makes little difference what is the cause of our death. Your mother had done her work well. She was a Christian; and in her last hours had faith to believe she should meet her entire family in Heaven." Thus much said, the listener was left to his own reflections.

No one in the house cared to eat; but the doctor insisted that all should take their places at the table; and after, when they left the dining-room, he said, "If I may be allowed the suggestion, I would propose that you retire early. I am sure that cousin Warren needs rest; and uncle must sleep if possible. I will spend the night here, and render any assistance that may be needed."

Gladly would he have prevented a visit to

the chamber of death; but failing in this, he could only seek to shorten the painful scene and soothe the grief thus renewed. With his uncle, this was very difficult; but at length, he had the satisfaction of seeing him sleep quietly.

Attention was then given to Warren, who seemed every moment to grow more restless. "You must have rest," said his cousin.

"I don't feel tired," was the response. "I have hardly slept, since I heard of mother's death, and my eyes feel staringly open."

"They look so," answered the doctor. "If you will take my advice, you will close them as soon as possible."

"I don't want to close them. To tell the truth, Hal, I'm terribly nervous. Mother's death, and my hurried journey has quite upset me, and I don't feel like myself."

Of course these had some effect; but Warren Lewis deceived neither himself nor his cousin, when he said this. The latter was a little nervous himself, until he knew that the family, generally, had retired, when he almost compelled Warren to go to the chamber allotted him.

Not a moment too soon was this effected. "Hal, that old hermit haunts me. Look! See his eyes, and his long hair, streaming in the wind! Take him away! For God's sake, take him away! What has he to do with me?"

"I will take him away. He shan't trouble you," said Dr. Manson. "Just get ready for a night's sleep, and I will take care of him."

"You're a good fellow, Hal. You were always a good fellow; and now if you'll give me a glass of brandy, I won't trouble you any more. But see! There is the old man!" he added, pointing to a corner of the room. "Can't you send him away?"



"Hal, that old hermit haunts me." Page 246.

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"Yes, yes," was answered, soothingly.

"Lie down, and he will go."

With trembling hands and quivering limbs, the wretched man obeyed; yet still the spectre haunted him. The doctor, prepared for this, gave him a powerful sedative, and awaited the result.

Here was one who should have been in the very vigor of manhood, prostrated, not by grief, as was his father, but by a poison which, while working slowly, works surely. Just across the hall, in a luxuriously furnished chamber, lay the form of his dead mother; but he did not think of her. Groans, tears and shrieks, stifled by the stern commands of one who understood how to use authority, betrayed his suffering. In his madness, he would spring to elude the grasp of his enemy. As a last resort, another sedative was administered, and the spell broken.

An hour's careful watching discovered no

sign of returning excitement, and Warren Lewis was left alone. Thanks to the knowledge and caution of his cousin, not a sound had been heard outside the room, which might not be attributed to ordinary conversation.

A few hours' sleep prepared the doctor for the duties of the morning. As he hoped, his uncle slept the entire night, and was quite calm, as he came into the parlor, enquiring for Warren.

- "I will go to his room, and see;" and glad of an excuse for so doing, Dr. Manson sprang up the stairs, and called to his cousin.
- "Come in. I'm glad it's you, Hal. I wanted you."
- "How do you find yourself this morning, cousin Warren?"
- "In poor condition, Hal. I must have some brandy. Is there any in the house?"
 - "Brandy is not kept in this house," an-

swered the doctor. "Your mother didn't believe in it."

"I know she didn't, the dear, good woman;" and here a burst of tears interrupted the speaker. "But whether I believe in it or not, I must have some this morning. Look at me, and you will see that I need it. I promise, sacredly, to drink only enough to steady my nerves. You may give it to me yourself."

It was no time for the necessary medical treatment to give strength to shattered nerves; and prepared, even for this emergency, the doctor soon produced a glass of brandy. "Drink that," he said; adding, "You should not receive it from my hands, under any other circumstances. But now, there seems to be no alternative."

The glass was drained eagerly, and with the exclamation, "Not half enough, Hal," returned for more.

"Wait!" was the reply. "You are far

gone, if that is not enough. I must go down and report to your father. In five minutes I will return."

"Give me more brandy before you go;" but Dr. Manson did not seem to hear this plea, as he left the room.

"Is Warren sick this morning?" asked Mr. Lewis, anxiously.

"He is not feeling very well," replied the doctor. "His long, hurried journey would try the strength of any one. But he will be down soon."

"Poor boy! I know it must be hard for him. I seem to forget everything but my own trouble. I have hardly thought of my children's loss. Oh, Mary, come back to us!" and the bereaved man opened his arms, only to fold them again wearily upon his breast.

"Where's the brandy, Hal? I looked for it every minute you were gone," was the exclamation which greeted the doctor, upon returning to his cousin's room. "Give it to me, or I shall die! There's the old man, in the corner, pointing his finger at me."

"Stop that folly!" was said, sternly.

"There is no old man in the corner. How do you expect to go through the day, unless you can control yourself, here in your room? I shall give you one more glass of brandy, and take care to keep the rest out of your way."

The door closed upon Warren Lewis, and he was left alone for a moment; while he strove, with all the force of will he could command, to recover composure. Of humiliation and shame, he had little sense; so overpowered were these by the maddening fancies he could not repress. Another glass of brandy, and his hand was firm, his brain comparatively clear.

"Take this, also," said the doctor, giving him a colorless powder; adding, "You will do well enough, now, if you let liquor alone. But if you drink another drop to-day, I'll not be responsible for the consequences."

No one of those who greeted this man, in the family that morning, suspected what he had suffered during the hours since they parted. Without embarrassment, he replied to enquiries concerning his health; acknowledging that he had been very much fatigued and his nerves somewhat unstrung.

"I don't wonder. It was very hard for you," said his father, pityingly.

It was a sad day for the relatives and friends of her whose death had made them mourners; but I will not linger over the funeral, or the closing of the coffin-lid upon the dear face which would be seen no more on earth. John Lewis felt that he had drained the cup of sorrow to its very dregs. Yet the wife of his love had gone where there is neither pain nor sickness, sorrow nor sighing. Often had she talked of this

upper home, while he but half comprehended the happiness she expressed. "I know you will come to me in Heaven;" she had said, as he bent to catch her last words. "And Warren. Tell him——"

"What could he tell? To Harry Manson was confided the important message for Warren. Whether she would have repeated it to her husband, at last, no one would ever know.

How desolate seemed the house, when night drew its curtains around it! "I can hardly realize that mother is really dead;" said the son, after a silence, broken only by the ticking of the clock, or a whispered remark from one of the grandchildren.

"It can't be! It can't be!" exclaimed the father, springing to his feet and pacing the room, hurriedly. "How am I to live without her? What shall I do?"

Every one was relieved by the appearance of Dr. Manson who soothed his uncle, as no

other could; speaking calmly and cheerfully, yet with no lack of sympathy.

"I believe you have great magnetic power," remarked Warren Lewis, when alone with his cousin, later in the evening.

"I wish I possessed ten times what you give me credit for having," was the reply.

"Why?" was asked, quickly.

'So that I might influence you, cousin Warren. I am shocked at your condition. I have a message from your mother which I may as well deliver, now. She never spoke of your habits to others; but with me she talked freely. She said, 'Tell Warren he must give up the use of wines and brandy or be ruined body and soul. Tell him he must give it up, or ruin the happiness of his wife and children. Then urge him by every possible motive to heed the warning.' I have delivered your mother's message. Now, shall I appeal to you as she desired?"

Warren Lewis longed to rush from the room and thus avoid further comment. But it was his dead mother who spoke to him through another's lips. It was his dead mother who had charged another to warn him of peril and danger.

"It's of no use, Hal," he said, at length.

"I love my mother and honor her memory;
but stimulants are a necessity to me. I could
never get through my business without
them."

"And how long do you expect to get through with them?"

An impatient gesture was ignored by the questioner, as he waited for the reply, "I don't know."

"You might make an estimate sufficiently accurate for practical purposes. At least, I could do so, with my knowledge of the human system."

"I am not a physician, Hal. I can't be

expected to know as much of such things as you do."

"Of course not, cousin Warren. But you must know that your powers of endurance are giving way rapidly. You had an attack of delirium tremens last night."

"For God's sake, Hal, don't use that term in connection with me. I know I was nervous; but it couldn't have been so bad as that."

"It was so bad. Have you ever had such an attack before?" A negative was the only reply, and the doctor continued. "Have you had any symptoms of such an attack? Has the old hermit appeared to you before?"

"Once before," was said, after some hesitation. "I don't think it strange that he has. You talked so much about him for months when we were at Holcombe, that he haunted me even then. I never could understand your taking such an interest in that poor, demented wretch."

"Because he was such a poor, demented wretch, when he ought to have been one of the grandest men of his time. It seems strange that a man who might command success in any position, should become the slave of a debasing appetite; yet he is not the only instance of such slavery. But I have wandered far from my starting-point. I must tell you, cousin Warren, that you are liable, at any time, to suffer as you did last night, unless you change your manner of living. A few such attacks, increasing in severity, would leave you in a sad condition. I know you are impatient at this talk," Dr. Manson continued. "I know I am presuming as perhaps no other one of your friends would dare presume; but my love for you and for your dead mother move me to do this. What can I say to make you realize your danger? Do you know it?" he asked, in an excited tone, which made his companion start with surprise.

"I know more than you can tell me; but I still have confidence in myself," was the answer given to this question.

"It may be that you have, this evening;" and the speaker resumed his natural tone. "But last night and this morning your confidence was in brandy."

"Hal, you torture me!" cried Warren Lewis, wildly. "What would you have?"

"I would have you for ever abjure the use of all intoxicating liquors, regain your health, and live to a good old age, respected and happy. Oh, Warren, do be persuaded, before it is too late. Think of your accountability to God."

"You know I will not bind myself with pledges, Hal. I will never do that. It is too childish."

"Childish!" repeated Dr. Manson, scornfully. "In every business transaction, you bind yourself by some pledge. In every friendship, pledges are made or implied. Say

you are determined to go on as you have commenced; but don't say that pledges are childish."

The man thus addressed replied as best he could; and the conversation was continued, until, convinced that no good would be effected by further discussion, the doctor rose to leave. Clasping the hand, and looking steadily into the face of his cousin, he said, "I promised your mother I would appeal to you, by every motive man holds sacred. Tell me, Warren, if I have redeemed that promise. If you are ruined, shall I be held guiltless?"

"Yes, Hal, yes! God bless you!" and for a moment all that was noble in the nature of Warren Lewis, struggled for ascendency. "I shall think of what you have said. Goodnight."

"Good-night, cousin Warren. I shall never allude to this subject again, unless you desire it; but I shall never cease to pray for you.

God bless you, and keep you from all evil."
Thus they parted.

The morrow brought its cares and responsibilities. Mr. Lewis could not stay in his old home; yet refused to go with either of his daughters.

Mrs. Manson invited him to spend a few weeks with her; but this he was not pleased to do. At length, his son proposed a long visit west; and the family seeing no objection to such an arrangement, were rejoiced when he decided to go.

This decision was no sooner announced to Dr. Manson, than he wrote a long, confidential letter to his sister and her husband. "I must say that I think brother Harry is troubled without cause, this time," she remarked, after reading the letter aloud.

"You may be sure he understands Uncle John far better than we do." Marion Lewis welcomed her father-in-law affectionately, tears expressing both sympathy for him, and sorrow for her own loss. The children divided their attention between papa and grandpa; winning smiles from the latter, despite his heavy heart.

"Five noble boys," he said, looking fondly upon them. "You ought to be a happy man, Warren. "I am afraid you will find me tiresome," he added, turning to his daughter. "My wife was everything to me, as you are to your husband, and I am afraid of going wrong without her. She was my conscience."

"Father, you will take a glass of wine," said Warren Lewis, as they sat at the dinner table the next day.

"No, I think not," was the reply. "Your mother never liked to have me drink it."

"But you need it, now, as a medicine. You said you felt better for it, on your journey."

"Yes, I did. It seemed to put a little life into me; but I don't wish to get into the habit of drinking it.

This was said listlessly, as though drinking or not drinking was of small consequence; and a little more persuasion silenced all scruples. "Marion, do you never taste of wine?"

"Never!" she replied, emphatically; and a glance from her husband prevented further remark.

"I seldom drink it," remarked the old gentleman. "But coming out here, I don't know how I should have kept up without an occasional glass of wine."

"He wouldn't have drinked it, if mother had been with him," thought Marion, with difficulty repressing the words which sprang to her lips.

How she longed when alone with him, to unburden her heart, and beg him never to taste wine again at her table. But fear that he would betray her interference kept her silent, while day after day, both father and son drank wine in her presence, and in the presence of her children.

How could a man do this while mourning the loss of one whose whole life had been a protest against such indulgence, and who, as he often said, had saved him from a career of dissipation! I cannot tell. I only know that so it was; until Mary Carr, aware of the fact, no longer wondered at her brother's anxiety.

"What can we do?" she exclaimed, after returning home from a dinner at her cousin's. "It made me shudder to see Uncle John drain his glass. And how Warren has changed! Did you notice how he looked, to-day?"

"I always notice his looks," was the reply.

"He is growing old too fast."

"And Marion, too, John. I tell you that she has more trouble than she allows any one to see."

"Mr. Lewis is considering a new speculation," said John Carr, after a short silence. "He didn't speak of it to-day, as I hoped he would; but Uncle John told me about it. He has enough business on his hands, now, and I am growing anxious in regard to his health. He must break down soon, if he goes on at this rate."

Mary, knowing what was implied by this last remark, asked no questions. Her anxiety, just then, was for her uncle rather than her cousin; and this anxiety was increased when told by the former that he had some thought of making the west his permanent residence.

"I don't think I would," she said seriously, in reply to this.

"Why, Mary, wouldn't you like your old uncle for a neighbor?"

"Yes, sir; but it would never seem like home to you here."

"It will never seem like home, anywhere," he responded. "I can't go back to the house where I lived so many happy years with my wife. I can't do it," he repeated. "It unmans me to think of it. I haven't any heart for business, either. I believe I can endure life here, with Warren and his family, better than anywhere else."

"But what would Mr. Jewett and Paul say to your leaving the store?" asked Mary, in her surprise, with no definite thought of what she was saying.

"They can do well enough without me," he answered. "Paul could manage the entire business alone. My daughters don't need me," added the lonely man, sighing as he thought of her whose life had so long formed a part of his own. What shall I do but stay here? Can you tell me, Mary?"

She wished to say, "Go back and do your duty;" but then would come the question, "What is my duty?" and this she was not prepared to answer.

The speculation in which Warren Lewis proposed to engage, fascinated his father, who was only too ready to consider his judgment infallible.

"Shall you invest with your son?" John Carr ventured to ask, when this speculation was under discussion.

"I am thinking of it," was the reply. "To tell the truth, John, it makes little difference to me what I do. I am interested for a little while; but it is all over, when I think of my wife. I must get through the rest of my life, some way."

"Yes, uncle John, and you must get through eternity, after this world."

"Yes, yes," he replied. "I wish I was sure about that, John. I never could feel as

Mary did, and since she left me, it is all strange and dark."

Well might John Lewis say his wife had been his conscience, and in one way he had trusted too much to her. She supplied the religious element in her family, praying for and with her children, while their father bade them look to her for instruction.

The daughters became Christians. The son, engrossed in worldly pursuits, was in danger of forgetting the prayers learned at his mother's knee. Was he also in danger of forgetting his mother? He would have been indignant, had any one suggested the possibility of this; yet he dishonored her memory, with little compunction. He had tempted his father to drink wine, constantly repeating the temptation, until persuasion was unnecessary.

Justice, however, compels me to say that the message delivered by Dr. Manson, and the appeal accompanying it, did have the effect to make Warren Lewis very wretched, for several days. Some things he had before seen but dimly, now stood out in bold relief; and he denied himself the unlimited indulgence to which he was accustomed. He could not think of total abstinence. It would involve an utter prostration of his powers, both mental and physical; and yet he knew there would come a time, when —

Often had he reached this point in his conclusions; and as often refused to see the end. His wife no longer remonstrated with him, or, indeed, replied at all when he was in his worst moods. It seemed to her now, that she could bear anything from her husband, if his father was not injured. Danger threatened and she was powerless to avert the blow.

His visit had been extended long beyond what was expected, when entering the room she usually occupied with her children, Mr.

Lewis surprised his daughter-in-law weeping. "Why, Marion, dear, what is the matter?" he exclaimed.

"Nothing, only I am tired and a little nervous," she replied. "Tears are sometimes a great relief to me."

"But it hurts me to see them," was the reply. "I always felt myself responsible for every tear my wife shed. Now she has gone, I have nothing to live for but my children, and they have enough without me."

"Oh, no, father. We should miss you sadly. We all wish to make you happy."

"I know it, Marion, and you have done me good since I came here. I don't know but I might be interested in business again, if I should be with Warren. Would you be willing to have the old man stay?"

"Yes, father, if you could be happy with us."

"I could be happier here than anywhere

else," replied the old gentleman; and after this, weeks lapsed into months, without any definite arrangements for return or permanent residence.

His house was occupied by Dr. Manson and the lovely woman whom he called "wife." A second wife she was; yet in the rich maturity of his manhood, he gave her all of devotion and tenderness her heart could crave. Every one rejoiced at his marriage, and this occupation of Uncle John's house had been proposed by its owner, so that he need feel no care in regard to it. The furniture remained as it had been arranged by his wife, and he was pleased to have it so.

Dr. Manson often thought of his uncle, wondering if it was well with him; while Mary wisely or unwisely forbore to write anything which would cause anxiety. "What good would it do?" she asked her husband when he once suggested it. "Uncle John

can't be placed under guardianship, and Warren is nearer to him than Harry. He has a right to invest his money as he pleases, and to eat and drink what he pleases. I wish Marion would speak to me about it. Then, perhaps, something might be done."

At length Marion did speak. "I don't know as I ought to tell you," she said, sinking into a chair, after their first greetings. "But I must tell some one or I shall die. O Mary, thank God there is no wine-drinking in your house. It is a curse, the deadliest curse;" and then the speaker's voice was choked with sobs. "I have come to see if you can help me."

Fatigue and excitement here so overpowered her that she required support to
prevent her falling. Lie down and rest,"
said Mary, tenderly. "Tell me anything
you please; and be sure I will find some way
to help you."

With sighs and tears and groans a story was told, the like of which has been told by many a heart-broken wife and mother. A husband, honored and respected by the world, was an exacting tyrant at home.

"I don't know how it is that he controls himself before father," said Marion. "But he does; and usually before me. Sometimes he seems so unhappy, that I pity him more than I blame him; and I know he is fast wearing himself out. In his sleep he talks of an old man with streaming hair and flaming eyes. He starts and shrieks, until I think every one in the house must hear him. Yet I could bear that, if it was not for father. He is learning to love wine. I have watched him, and I can see it. He has been here almost four months, and he ought to go home. He talks of selling out his business and spending his life here; but it will kill me if he does, and, and -" here her voice

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fell to a whisper,—"he will be a drunkard." Mary Carr had said this often to herself; yet shuddered as she heard it said by another. She was unable to command her voice for a reply. Marion looked up sadly, asking, "Can't you help me?"

"I will try," answered Mary, with great effort. "If Harry was only here, he might influence uncle John. I have thought of talking to uncle John, myself."

"Did you ever say anything to Warren about drinking as he does?" After all, the thought of her husband was uppermost in the mind of Marion Lewis, as this question plainly showed.

"It would do no good," answered Mary.

"John has talked with him, several times;
but cousin Warren thinks he knows best.

May I tell John what you have told me?"

"Yes," was the reply, after some hesitation. "Some one must help me, and I know I can trust your husband."

Back to her home went Marion Lewis, with heart somewhat relieved, and courage strengthened, by this interview. Such a beautiful home as was hers! How could its inmates be otherwise than happy? Additions had been made to the house, until it would be hardly recognized as the same into which a happy bride had been ushered.

So far off seemed that day, it was sometimes almost lost from sight; then it would reappear vividly, as if to mock the wretched wife. She had intended to talk frankly with mother Lewis, hoping for counsel and assistance. Now she must seek these elsewhere; and contrary to her intention of bearing her troubles alone, she had made a confidant of Mary Carr.

Matters were worse than John had feared, although he considered himself well acquainted with his old employer. "You must do something," said his wife. "Uncle must go home, and Warren must be reformed."

"Easier said than done," was the reply.

"Uncle John may be managed, but Warren will do as he pleases. Suppose we go there this evening."

This suggestion was carried out, but Mr. Warren Lewis was spending the evening with some gentlemen at one of the hotels.

"Another speculation, uncle John?" asked his niece.

"Something of the kind," he replied. "A great railway project is under consideration. Things move pretty fast, out here. Perhaps I may catch some of the wide-awake spirit myself," he added, rubbing his hands in the old fashion. "I believe I have talked more about railways to-day, than in any month of my life before;" and by the brightness of the speaker's eyes, and the flush upon his cheeks, John Carr knew the talking had been enlivened by drinking.

Before leaving, the visitors proposed that

uncle John should spend the following day with them. "Come early, and take breakfast with us," said Mary, cordially. "We will have it half an hour later than usual, and I will make the muffins myself, if you will help eat them."

"Agreed," was the reply. "I will come.
But you must have breakfast at the usual
hour. I am an early riser."

The next morning, Mr. Lewis was at John Carr's an hour before the time appointed, and his niece was about to greet him playfully, when she noticed his worn and haggard looks. "What is it?" she asked. "Are you sick? Have you heard bad news?"

"Both," he answered. "I am heart sick and I have heard bad news. I want John."

John came, and the old man prayed for help, even as his daughter had done, the day before. "My boy is a drunkard! Did you know it, John?" "Not quite so bad as that," was answered, soothingly. "He don't practice total abstinence, but I should be sorry to call him a drunkard."

"But he is," persisted the father. "He abuses his wife and never hears to her advice.

He didn't come home till midnight, and—"

"He had taken too much wine," added John Carr, without waiting for the sentence to be completed.

"A great deal too much. We had a dreadful night. He was a perfect madman, and I don't think it was the first time he has been so. His mother used to worry about him; but I never have since I sent him to Holcombe with Harry Manson. I wish Harry was here. Seems to me he could do something;" and at this Mr. Lewis broke down, utterly weeping without restraint. "Can't you help me, John. I can see, now, that Warren has changed in many ways. Oh, I

would rather see him dead than as he was last night. My boy a drunkard! It will kill me. I am glad his mother didn't live to know it. Yes, John, I am glad. She could never have borne it. I'll see you again to-day, John, but I must go home to Marion, now. She needs me."

"See Mary, first," said the younger man. She will be disappointed if you go so soon."

"You must stop until after breakfast," said Mary, coming into the room. "It can be ready in a few minutes, and we will eat before the children come down."

Mr. Lewis, of course, said he did not care for breakfast; but he could not withstand Mary's pleadings, and the three were soon seated around a well spread table. The hostess compelled herself to eat, and persuaded Uncle John to follow her example; yet it was by no means a cheerful meal.

"I suppose, now, you are willing I should

go," remarked Mr. Lewis, absently, when they rose from the table.

"It may be best that you should go," answered Mary. Then clasping both his hands, she added, "If you would make me one promise, uncle, I should be a great deal happier."

"I will promise anything in reason," he replied, stooping to leave a kiss upon her forehead.

"Then promise me not to drink any wine to-day. You wouldn't if Aunt Mary was with you."

A deathly pallor overspread the face of John Lewis. His breathing was quick and labored. "What have I done!" he cried. "Mary, my Mary, forgive me!" and he raised his hands, imploringly. "Never again! God help me! Never again! Bless you Mary Carr, for speaking to me. It was time. I must go to Marion," and before another word could be spoken, he was gone.

Even the servants looked strangely, in the home of Warren Lewis that morning. A spell seemed upon all in the house. Doors were opened and closed, noiselessly. There were whispered consultations in the kitchen, and anxious glances in the breakfast room.

Of course, the servants had known that their master was no saint; yet they had never seen him intoxicated.

"I don't believe it, now," said one.

"You can believe or not," was the reply.

"I tell you he lumbered up-stairs last night like any drunken man, and his tongue was running till most daylight. The old gentleman went to see what was the matter.

Humiliated, indeed, was the merchant, when he realized what had occurred. Cursing himself for a fool, he yet blamed his wife for not having in some way, concealed his folly. "Father will think me a great deal worse than I am," he said, in a morose tone, after

being assured that his own boisterous demonstrations had roused his father. "We got so deep in business that I drank more than I ought to; and that is all there is to it."

That was only the beginning, as his wife might have told him; but adhering to her self-imposed silence, she made no reply.

"Why don't you say something?" he demanded sternly. "You would drive any man desperate, with your tears. I've had enough of them."

Oh, would he never stop! What could she say to soothe his irritated feelings! Past experience had taught her many bitter lessons; and she choked back the sobs which must not be heard. Her husband had never struck her; but this morning she feared even that, and felt a sense of relief when she closed the door upon him, and went to meet her children.

How she managed to control herself at

breakfast, she did not know. Everything seemed vague and dreamy. She saw, as not seeing, and heard, as not hearing. Yet she attended to the wants of all, with the same gentle courtesy as usual; and while forgetting her own needs, was solicitous for others.

From the breakfast room Warren Lewis went directly to the library, and throwing himself into a chair, considered what he should do. He knew his father would demand an explanation of his conduct; and for the first time he felt his father's presence a burden. Moreover he fancied that his wife had looked upon him coldly; and he recognized the possibility of losing her respect. As for himself, he was in no condition to attend to business.

He heard his children in the hall, talking with their grandfather; and presently some one asked admittance.

"Come," he said. The door opened to admit five boys; the youngest cradled in the old man's arms. "A committee of the whole," he exclaimed, with forced cheerfulness. "This is an unexpected pleasure. What matter of importance is now under consideration?"

"Not any, father," replied John, the eldest boy. Grandpa thought it would be nice, to come in all together. So we did, baby and all."

"And isn't it nice, my son," grandpa hastened to add. "Don't you think we look well, together? For my part, I am proud of these boys, and hope they will make good, true men; such men as their grandmother prayed they might be. I tell you, Warren, we ought to be a great deal better ourselves."

"Certainly. We are none of us perfect," was the reply. "I hope my boys will do right."

"Then you must set them a good example.

A man has no right to expect his children to be better than himself."

"I mean to be good," now chimed in some young voices. "Mother says we must, and she knows," added John, decidedly.

Grandpa did not care to prolong this visit; yet soon after leaving the room, with his companions, he returned alone; and looking at his son sadly, said, "I never thought to see my boy a drunkard. God forgive me, if I failed to do my duty by you. I would rather see you in your coffin, than as I saw you last night."

It cost the speaker a terrible effort to say this; how terrible, one might guess by the great drops of perspiration upon his forehead, and the agonized expression of his face. Conflicting emotions prevented the son's replying, until silence became painful, and he was about to make some further re-

marks, when Warren said, in a husky voice, "I never thought to hear my father call me a drunkard."

"But it is true, my son."

"It is not true;" and now the voice was clear and distinct. "No man shall say that; not even my father. I told Marion you would think me a great deal worse than I am;" and here followed a detailed account of the previous evening's entertainment.

Of course everything was shown in its best light, yet the father saw no reason to retract his obnoxious statement. He talked long with his son, acknowledging his own weakness, and early indiscretions.

"Your mother saved me," he said. "I have wondered how she dared to trust me; but she did, and I tried to make her happy. I shouldn't have been fit to live, if I had ever spoken to her, as you speak to Marion. You will lose your wife, unless you treat her differently."

"Lose her! How?" asked Warren Lewis, startled at the very thought of such a calamity.

"She will die, and thus you will lose her."

CHAPTER VII.

High noon of life. The brightest days,
The grandest work, the noblest praise
Should crown this noon, and make it blest,
Beyond all time of toil or rest;
And woe to him who dares misspend
The years on which such joys depend.

OR weeks, it seemed that the prophecy

Lewis was prostrated with an illness from which even her physicians thought it impossible that she could recover. Unconscious of what transpired around her, there were days when she never ceased to moan piteously, except when under the influence of stupefying drugs. Sometimes she murmured softly, as if hushing an infant to rest. Then

she would call for her own dear mother, who, long before, had gone to dwell with the angels. Her husband, tortured with remorse and fear, longed to implore her forgiveness; but whenever he came into her presence, she turned from him as from an enemy.

Mr. Gregory visited his daughter, and, shocked by what he saw and heard, administered a severe rebuke to his son-in-law. Apologies were useless. Nothing could excuse the ill-treatment of such a wife, and the wretched husband attempted no justification of his conduct.

That he should ever be forced to make the confessions which he did! That he should ever bow his head for very shame, and beg to be spared further reproach!

"If Marion dies, I will never forgive you! Never!" said Mr. Gregory, with fearful emphasis. "She ought to have denounced you, years ago!"

My readers will please remember that the man who cowered beneath these words was a wealthy merchant, holding various offices of trust and emolument. In society, he was generous, courteous, and genial. At the head of an extensive business, he was in pecuniary matters, honorable and upright. All this he was, and yet, at the same time, he was a drunkard.

He did not drink the coarse, cheap liquors with which poor men satisfy their depraved appetites. He did not curse and swear at the street corners,—Oh, no! He was a man of refined tastes. Only the best would be tolerated by him; and he walked the streets proud of his position. His father's entire property was small, compared with his own; while his yearly income would have seemed to many, a fortune in itself.

"Do you suppose Hal would come, if I should send for him?" he one day asked his cousin, Mary Carr.

"He would come, if it was possible for him to do so," was the reply; and in less than an hour, Dr. Manson received a despatch, summoning him to the bedside of Marion Lewis.

A letter, giving an account of her sickness, had reached him the day previous; and this with his anxiety for his uncle, decided him. He left his patients in the care of another, and started at once; hoping to benefit his friends in more ways than one.

"Bless you for coming, Hal! Thank God you are here!" were the greetings which told how earnestly his presence had been desired. While resting, for a little, before seeing the invalid, he learned what he could of the symptoms and progress of her disease.

"You will save her life," said his cousin, questioningly.

"I will do what I can," he answered; and applied himself to the task with untiring

devotion. Watching and waiting, consulting with others, yet relying upon his own judgment, he was, at length, able to say that there was a prospect of recovery.

Then every one in the house breathed more freely. A burden was lifted from every heart, and other interests were considered. In a long, confidential talk with his uncle, Dr. Manson was assured of many things he had before suspected.

"I pity Marion, and I wish I could help her," said the old man, tears attesting to his sympathy. "She has a hard lot to bear with her husband, if he is my son. I wish I could take her and her children home with me, and make them happy. You must talk to Warren. You know how better than I, and if any one can influence him, you can. I am thankful his mother didn't live to see this day. It is hard enough for me. But I must tell you how wrong I have been. I am going home as

soon as Marion is better," he added, after a long silence following his confession of the sin into which he had fallen. "I don't seem to have much to live for; but if you and your wife will stay with me, I will try to do my duty; and—and—I want to be a Christian, Harry. You don't think it's too late for that."

"Never too late, while life remains," was the answer. "I have prayed that you might be brought to this, Uncle John. I know how lonely you are, and how desolate your life seems; but God knows best what we need to draw us to himself."

Notwithstanding the oft-repeated request that he would urge his cousin to reform, Dr. Manson felt himself pledged to silence. He knew by the haggard face and bloodshotten eyes, that a terrible penalty was paid for sinful indulgence, yet his lips were sealed.

Silence, however, thus enforced, had its

own language, more eloquent than words; a dumb reproach, to which no reply could be made. The cousins talked freely upon other subjects; sat at the same table, and loved each other none the less, that they were drifting wide apart. Indeed, it is possible that their affection deepened, as they realized this. Certain it is that Harry Manson never felt more solicitude, or prayed more earnestly for any friend, than he did for Warren Lewis. The children, too,—how his heart yearned over them.

"I believe my mission is so far accomplished that it will be best for me to leave in the morning," he said, at the close of a day, when Mrs. Lewis had shown such improvement that there seemed little danger of a relapse.

"You must prescribe for me first," responded his cousin, after some hesitation.
"I have more confidence in you than in any one else, and I need medical treatment."

"What can I say?" asked the doctor, after listening to a fearful category of infirmaties. "You know what has brought you to your present condition; and there can be no permanent relief, without—"

"Without what?" demanded Warren Lewis, impatiently. "Speak out what you mean. The truth won't hurt me."

"I wish it might do you good," was the reply, made in a serious tone. "I can tell you nothing which I have not told you before, You must reform, or die the death of a drunkard. Medicine will have little effect upon you, until the cause of your disease is removed."

"I have been more temperate since mother died," was said, after a somewhat prolonged silence. "I indulged too freely, one evening in company, but I have been punished for that, and am not likely to offend again, in the same way. Tell me how much or how little stimulant I can take with safety."

"Not a drop, cousin Warren. Nothing but total abstinence will save you; and that should be adopted soon. If you will follow my prescription faithfully, I think you can regain both mental and physical strength. The old hermit will cease to haunt you, and you may yet be a happy man."

"Who said the old hermit haunted me?" asked Warren Lewis, in an excited tone.

"I did not need that any one should say it," answered Dr. Manson. "I have seen you close your eyes, as if to shut out some disagreeable sight, or turn aside to look from a window, when I knew, by the expression of your face, that you saw what you did not wish to see."

"It's true, Hal. No use for me to deny it, although I know I am a fool. I see the old man everywhere. Sometimes his hateful face comes between me and my children; and sometimes it stares at me, from my Ledger."

"Cousin Warren, do you remember that you have often said you would give up the use of liquor, whenever you were convinced that it injured you? Has not that time come?

Do you doubt my word, when I tell you you are killing yourself?"

"No, Hal, I believe every word you say. I wish to God I had never tasted of wine; and yet, it will kill me to give it up. I can't do it, Hal. I don't know as I have the power;" and the proud man pressed his hands to his forehead, in the vain effort to still the throbbings of his brain. "I never dreamed I should come to this. Think of it, Hal; I have been prospered in everything except myself."

Hal had thought of it sadly, and could not find it in his heart to congratulate his cousin upon the accumulation of property. He did what he could in the way of prescription, hoping some good might be effected; yet knowing well that this depended upon the will and conduct of another.

"I will try to do as you tell me," said Warren Lewis. "I dare not promise more than that. If I am saved, it will be through your influence. If I am lost, I alone shall be guilty."

When Dr. Manson left, every member of the family felt that a tower of strength had been removed. He was so cheerful, even the servants caught something of his spirit, and rejoiced to do his bidding. For each and all, he had a kind, hearty word.

As he had predicted, the health of Mrs. Lewis continued to improve; and when able to join her children, she was so thankful for having been spared to them, that she could not murmur at her lot. The world did not seem wholly dark; although for her the brightest dream of woman's heart had faded. She would not look back, but prayed for strength to go forward. She had leaned upon an arm of flesh; henceforth, she must

depend upon one able to save to the uttermost.

Her husband had asked pardon for his unkindness; acknowledging his fault so humbly, that the very humility pained her. "Let us never speak of it again," she said, after assuring him of her entire forgiveness. "Perhaps I have been too sensitive. We can both try to do better in future;" and remembering that he was annoyed by tears, she repressed so far as possible, every appearance of emotion.

He would have been better pleased had she thrown herself into his arms, and wept without restraint; but she could not know this. Desiring to act in accordance with his wishes, she assumed a calmness she was far from feeling.

Mr. John Lewis remained until he saw his daughter attending to her ordinary duties, and then he, too, went to his eastern home.

"You can depend upon me, always," the old man had said to Marion. "If you need a friend send for me. We neither of us know what the future will bring; but you and I must do our duty, even if it is hard. If your happiness depended upon my wishes, you would be a happy woman."

To Warren he spoke differently; entreating that the past might suffice for wrong doing. When gone, the son was more than ever absorbed in business. The speculation in which he had engaged, demanded attention. To be carried through successfully, it must be well managed; and he had too much at stake not to realize this.

His health was good, as he assured every one who ventured a question upon the subject; and there certainly was a decided improvement. There was a change, too, in his habits. No wine at dinner, and no fault-finding. He manifested more fondness for his children, and

addressed his wife kindly. John Carr hoped for a radical reform in his friend; and Mary, glad to transmit the good news, wrote her brother to that effect.

Six months went by. Warren Lewis considered himself a redeemed man, although he did occasionally drink a glass of wine. He made no disclosure of what he suffered from the cravings of appetite. Indeed, he would have denied that he suffered at all; yet it is true that he often endured the most intense torture. His will was strong, as he proved, day after day; and it would have been comparatively easy for him to forego entirely the use of intoxicating liquors. He could do it, as he acknowledged to himself, with conscious pride. Why did he not do it? Perhaps the very success of his present course made him less inclined to this.

Business called him from home, as he announced to his wife. "How long will you be gone?" she asked.

"I can't tell," he answered. "Certainly not longer than is necessary. I will write to you, if I am gone more than a week."

She asked no further questions, and her husband did not explain his business; but John Carr knew that the grand speculation in which he had embarked, threatened to prove a failure. Mr. Lewis had been chosen by those associated with him, to investigate the matter, and act as he judged best, for all concerned.

- "I don't like the looks of things for that company," said Albert Jefts, a few days after the merchant had started on his mission. "I wish Mr. Lewis was at home; I never fancied his going. No good will come of it."
- "You and Mary are inclined to look on the dark side," was the reply of John Carr. "It won't hurt Mr. Lewis to lose a few thousand dollars."

"In one way it will not. A few thousand

dollars, more or less, would not effect his style of living, or his business."

"Of course not. He is beyond that, and I am thankful. I should be sorry to have him meet with any reverse."

Mr. Jefts was quite willing to change the subject of conversation, since the expression of his fears would have no influence upon the point at issue.

Mrs. Lewis received a letter from her husband. He could not tell when he should return; but there was no cause for anxiety in regard to him. He might go further west.

After this letter was dispatched, Warren Lewis could hardly have told what it contained. He was in a state of great excitement. He had accomplished nothing he desired. There still remained a possibility of doing this, by extending his journey, and he prepared for another effort. Yet he was despondent; easily depressed by every un-

favorable report; and in no condition to act wisely. A brave heart is in itself a pledge of success; but this he lacked. He knew that his business at home required attention. Care pressed heavily upon him.

As was natural to one of his previous habits, he had recourse to stimulants to supply courage and strength; and the result was what might have been expected. So soon as convinced that the scheme which had seemed to promise so much would return far less than had been invested, he was completely prostrated.

Yet, still desirous of reaching home, as soon as possible, he turned his face eastward. Brandy kept him equal to traveling, for twenty-four hours; and then he was seized with a delirium, which left him no power of choice. The country was new, and the hotels, by no means first class; yet accommodations were found for him in one somewhat better

than the average. He was among strangers; but, fortunately, one of his traveling companions was able to give his name and vouch for all expenses incurred by him.

Still more fortunate was it that, later in the evening, a surveying party came in to pass the night, and obtain supplies. With them, was one whose clear-cut, intellectual face stamped him as a scholar, rather than an ordinary worker; and whose enthusiastic comments upon what he had seen, bespoke him a lover of nature.

"Well, Professor, are you going on with us?" asked one of his companions.

"Certainly," was the reply. "I am equal to long tramps and camping out, so long as I can get plenty of pure air and clear, cold water."

"Got a doctor among you?" The landlord had been called from the room; and on his return, asked this question. "There's the Professor, about half a doctor," answered one. "He can manage any ordinary case."

"Then I wish he'd try his hand on a man up-stairs. Something's got to be done, or he'll tear the house down, in some of his tantrums. He's a stranger to me, left here by the stage; but somebody said he was rich, and told his name."

- "What is his name?"
- " Lewis."
- "Show me to his room, and I will do what I can for him," said the man, who had been called half a doctor. "I am a good nurse, at least."

"The man's pretty crazy," the landlord remarked, as they went up the stairs. "Reckon he's a high liver, when he's at home."

Never was a meeting more unexpected than this, when Ellis Farley grasped the hand of his cousin. "You, my cousin!" exclaimed the delirious man. "I don't believe it. You can't fool me. Cousin Ellis was lame. Couldn't walk a step, when the old hermit made us a visit. You don't know anything about him. No, you don't. The old fellow is my particular friend. Look at him, over there in the corner! You see him, don't you? Don't talk much; but stays right along, and keeps jolly."

"I see you, cousin Warren. You must have been dreaming. How came you out in this country?"

"How came you out here?" was asked, in reply. "I believe it is Ellis, after all. They call you Professor, now, don't they?"

"Some people call me so. I came out here to study nature a little; and I am very glad our party found it convenient to spend the night in this house. Else I should probably have missed you."

Mr. Lewis, roused for a little, made a great

effort to control himself, and talk coherently; but this was impossible. He complained of headache and feverish thirst. He asked for brandy; then demanded it; and, at length, swore that no one should keep it from him.

"Hal has no right to treat me as a child," he cried. "I'll do as I please, and drink what I please. And you old fellow, over there, better keep out of my way," he added, shaking his fist towards a corner of the room.

Ellis Farley had never seen such a case as this: but he understood it, sufficiently, to know that his cousin was suffering from an attack of delirium tremens. His medical knowledge was only such as is gained by observation, and the practice which usually falls to the best nurse of a traveling party. He had not expected such a call as this; and doubting if he was equal to the occasion, was about to ask if a physician could be obtained, when brandy was again demanded.

"Shall I bring some?" asked the landlord, who had been standing just outside the door.

"No, sir. Bring my knapsack, if you please; and a glass of cold water."

It required both persuasion and force to induce Mr. Lewis to swallow the potion prepared for him, although assured it would do him good. He accused Ellis Farley of attempting to poison him, declaring that what he had taken was liquid fire.

His ravings were frightful and disconnected; yet the old hermit and Hal seemed first in his thoughts. At length he slept; starting, muttering, and shouting, until his delirium exhausted itself. By this time, it was nearly morning, when his cousin obtained a few hours' rest.

This meeting necessitated a change in the Professor's plans. He could not go on with his party, as he announced at the breakfast table, greatly to the disappointment of all concerned.

"And the best of our route before us," said one. "I don't see how we can do without you. We might wait a day."

"You need not do that," was the reply.

"It is quite possible that I shall go home with
Mr. Lewis. Unless he improves very much I
must, and trust to joining you again somewhere this side the mountains."

They did wait, however, one day. But the sick man could not be left. Neither was he in any condition for travelling; so that several days went by, wearily.

"It seems strange that we should meet out here, Cousin Ellis, when I supposed you a thousand miles away," he said, in answer to some remark.

"There was a providence in it," his cousin replied. "I must have been sent here for the purpose of meeting you; and I am very glad it was so. You needed some one to take care of you."

"Yes, and need still more. I must get home as soon as possible. Can you go with me?"

"Whenever you are able."

"Then let us start to-morrow," was the response. "I know you have sacrificed your plans, to stay with me, and I am very grateful. I can never repay you; but what I can do, I will. I used to think money would buy everything."

"Not everything, Cousin Warren. Health, strength and happiness are not to be bought with silver or gold."

"If they were, I should be a richer man than I am now; although I am poorer by some thousand dollars, than I was six months ago. My journey out here has been a waste of time, and I must go home."

"But you are in no condition to travel,"

said Ellis Farley. "You must wait until you are stronger."

"I must be strong," was the reply, and remonstrance was useless. The next morning, he resumed his journey. That he was suffering, his looks plainly showed; yet he made no complaint. Eating little and drinking much, he succeeded in reaching home, with his companion.

Seventy years seemed to have been added to his age, during his absence; and he had hardly returned the greetings of his family, when he begged to be allowed to rest. "I have had a hard jaunt, as you know," he said. "I shall be better to-morrow; but now, every noise distracts me."

Ellis Farley was welcomed cordially, and urged to prolong his stay. Mrs. Lewis was very grateful for his kindness, and so far as dollars and cents were concerned, he was generously remunerated, although refusing to

accept half which his cousin wished him to receive.

"You ought to stop and allow your friends here to become acquainted with you," said Mary Carr. "I consider myself neglected by my relatives. Father and mother think I am so far away, they can come but seldom, and my brothers and sisters make the same excuse."

"Then you must make amends, by visiting them," was the reply.

"I do visit them, but not so often as I should, if my husband could spend time to visit with me. We are such an old-fashioned couple, that we don't like to be separated;" and the happy laugh told that, to one at least, life had not been a disappointment.

"Then you wouldn't like to have cousin John spend his summers, exploring forests and climbing mountains, while you remained at home."

"Indeed, I wouldn't. I should insist upon going with him."

"So my wife said, before we were married, cousin Mary; and some of my most pleasant excursions have been made with her. I think we are as old-fashioned as you; although we live differently. My pursuits take me from home, more than I could wish. John is a model family man; and for that matter, he ought to be."

"So ought others. I wish cousin Warren was more like you and John. He has done better for the last few months," she hastened to add. "But I never feel that he is quite safe."

It was a great mortification to Mr. Lewis to confess that his journey had been unsuccessful, and the speculation of which he had been so confident, a failure. His loss was insignificant, compared with his means; but there were others, who had trusted his judg-

ment, upon whom the loss would fall heavily. He shrank from seeing them; yet, when in their presence, made a frank statement of the case, acknowledging that he had been deceived.

The meeting of the company was a severe tax upon his strength; occurring, as it did, when he ought to have been under a physician's care. Wine enlivened the occasion, while men drank to hide their chagrin and disappointment. Warren Lewis intended to drink sparingly; but prudence was forgotten. At a late hour, he was taken home in a carriage. His friends said he was ill; his enemies would have said that he was intoxicated.

His wife did not send for medical assistance. She was stronger than she had been, when this occurred before; and moreover, Dr. Manson had instructed her how to meet such an emergency. With steady hand she

prepared the draught which she pressed to his lips; speaking firmly, when he declined it, and conquering by her very calmness. It was dreadful to do this; but necessity knows no law.

The next day, the merchant could not leave his room. Suffering intensely, and craving what he knew would aggravate his sufferings, peace and happiness seemed infinitely removed from him. His nerves, quivering at every breath, protested against the unnatural sensitiveness to which they had been reduced. Over and over again, he cursed his weakness. His business required attention, and he must go to the store.

So he said to his wife, and attempted to rise from the bed, which he, at length, succeeded in doing, with her assistance.

"Poor Marion!" he added, looking at her, pityingly. "I never thought I should lean upon you, in this way. I have made a mis-

take somewhere in my life. I wish I could rectify it, for the sake of us all."

"I think you could rectify it," she answered; and the tears would come despite her efforts to restrain them.

"Poor Marion!" he said again. "You deserved a better husband than I have been.

And my boys ought to have a better father. I know it, as well as you do.

Here his speaking was interrupted by a paroxysm of pain, and he called for a remedy which he kept constantly at hand. For the first time, however, it produced no effect, and he was obliged to return to his bed. He suffered mentally, as well as physically. Mind and body reacted, each upon the other; and like a child, he desired the presence of some one who would give him sympathy. He begged his wife not to leave him, and at last broke down so entirely, that he wept.

"I wish Hal was here," he said, after a

short silence. "I need him. No one else can do me any good," he added, when it was proposed that the family physician be called. "Hal understands my case."

A few hours later, however, it became absolutely necessary to have some medical advice; and for the time, relief was gained, Mr. Lewis was again seen in his store, attending to business and professing to be well. Yet his friends were not deceived. John Carr, who was always anxious in regard to him, advised that he devote six months to the recovery of his health.

"And what should I do?" asked the elder merchant. "How should I set about it?"

"Take your family, and go east," was the reply. "Put yourself under Dr. Manson's care, and follow his directions, implicitly. My word for it, you'll take a new lease of life. That is what I should do, if my health was like yours."

Qbs.

"Your health will never be like mine, John. You began right, and when you are of my age, you will be in the very glory of your life. I have lived too fast, stimulated too much;" and there was a sad cadence in the voice which uttered this. "I am now paying the penalty. I know it better than any one can tell me. I hope my boys will do as you have done. John, you will be a friend to my boys."

"Yes, sir; I love them now, next to my own children; and I have not forgotten your kindness to a poor, lame boy, who was almost a beggar."

"Not very near to being a beggar now, John," was the response, made with affected cheerfulness.

"No, sir. But I never see a poor boy, looking as though he was hungry, without thinking of the days when I lay bolstered upon the bed, longing for mother to come and give

me something to eat. Poor mother! How hard she worked to take care of me! I assure you, poor children appeal to my heart, as they never can to yours. I have twenty boys in my Sabbath school class, every one of them as destitute as I was; and I hope to make good men of them. I have all their names on my temperance pledge."

"That is right, John. I used to think—But no matter. I shall be getting tedious, unless I stop where I am. Preach temperance to my boys as much as you please. I will think of your proposition, if I find myself getting worse."

Dr. Manson was constantly advised in regard to his cousin's health. He knew of the meeting with Ellis Farley. The details of this had been given to him, with such minuteness, that he comprehended it all; and it was at his suggestion that Warren Lewis was invited to spend several weeks in the old home.

The letter containing this invitation was received when the merchant had been confined to his house for two days; and his wife, who had been previously consulted in regard to such a visit, urged its acceptance.

"Let us go," she said. "You ought to give up care for a while. You can have the benefit of Dr. Manson's skill, and your health is now the first consideration. Let us go as soon as you are able to ride."

"But my business. What of that?" was asked; and the wife supposed that this was the cause of his hesitation. He would have said to any one that business kept him at his post; yet in his heart he knew it was not so.

He cared for his pecuniary interests. The ambition which had moved him, when younger, still held its sway. But money was not counted against health. Oh, no! He would have given half his fortune for the strength which had been his ten years before.

Another motive influenced him. He was now free to drain the poisoned cup, whenever appetite overmastered his will, or circumstances seemed to demand it. In his father's house, and under his cousin's care, he could not do this. The veriest drunkard who wallowed in the gutter, was not a more abject slave than he who had so often boasted of his own strength of purpose. He was sometimes so goaded almost to madness, that but for his family, he would have been tempted to forego everything, like the hermit of Holcombe, and drink until he died.

He debated long. John and Mary Carr implored him to go to his father's: his wife made preparations for so doing, and at length his physician said his life depended upon it. Then his cousins proved themselves friends indeed. Mary was willing to take four of his boys into her family, and although her father could not consent to being separated from

them, her kindness was none the less appreciated. John accompanied him the entire journey, guarding against every annoyance, and making the trip one of comparative comfort.

Having been expected, everything was in readiness for them; the doctor himself meeting them at the depot. Acquaintance was to be made with a new cousin, yet she seemed more like a sister than a stranger, as she welcomed both parents and children.

"I am glad you have come," said the father, looking anxiously into the face of his son. "I want you all to be comfortable, and consider this as your own home, while you remain. Harry and Jane proposed leaving me, when you decided to come; but I wouldn't hear to that."

"We thought it might be more pleasant for you, if we were away," added Mrs. Manson; but it certainly would not have been, as both Mr. and Mrs. Lewis hastened to say.

It was necessary that the invalid should seek rest at once; and he was assisted to his chamber, where nothing which could add to his comfort was wanting. Few questions were asked, although Dr. Manson allowed no movement or expression of his cousin to pass unnoticed.

"I shouldn't blame you, Hal, if you refused to do anything for me," was said, at length. "I have come to you, as a last resort."

"You are not the only one who has done that," replied the doctor, cheerfully. "I consider every such instance a compliment to my skill. But you must rest, now. Tomorrow morning, we will see what can be done for you."

"How is Warren?" asked the father, when he met his nephew, in the parlor.

"Very tired," was the reply." A night's rest will refresh him, so he will be more comfortable. We must give him time to recover from the fatigue of his journey."

"He has borne the journey much better than we feared," added John Carr. "He seems stronger than when we started."

Later in the evening, John told his brotherin-law that the physician who had attended
Warren Lewis said decidedly there was no
reason to expect his recovery; adding, "I
knew he must give up the use of liquor, before he could be cured. I was sure he would
never do that, at home."

"But since I saw him, he has drinked less than for some time previous."

"Yes, much less. But he has drinked enough to injure him; and if I am not mistaken, he has had one or two attacks of delirium tremens, within a month. Not very severe, perhaps, but bad enough. If you can save his life, you will effect a wonderful cure."

The doctor shook his head, as he replied, "I could have saved him six months ago, if he had followed my advice."

By the next morning, the family seemed comfortably established, the children, especially,—enjoying grandpa's house, and grandpa's society. Their father had so long held himself aloof from them, complaining that their noise was troublesome, they hardly missed him.

He did not appear at breakfast, and it was more than an hour after the morning meal, before he was ready to see his father. "I am sorry to see you in this condition," said the old man.

"And I am sorry to be in this condition," was the reply. "I expect Hal will bring me round, all right, in a few weeks. If not"—Here he paused.

"If not, what, my son?"

"I must bear it," was answered, after what seemed a long silence to him who waited. "I have brought this upon myself," continued the invalid. "Of course you know that."

"I thought so, my son;" and these words came slowly and painfully.

"It is so; and now the mistake of a life time must be repaired. Hal is to help me, and I am to do in all things as he tells me. No more wine or brandy for me, whether my life be long or short."

Hal, as his cousin called him, fearing the effect of a prolonged conversation, interrupted this interview, and his uncle gave place to him. Then followed a thorough examination of the patient; which completed, the cousins looked thoughtfully at each other.

"Tell the worst, Hal," said Warren Lewis, in a husky voice. "I have no wish to be deceived."

"You should have come to me three months ago; but now, if you are ready to ——"

"I am ready to do anything, anything," was the exclamation which interrupted this

remark. "Only save my life. You may order anything I shall eat or drink, and come what may, I will obey you. Lying here last night, with the old hermit staring at me, I thought over my past life, and saw it in a new light. I have been all wrong. I have not lived as I should, and now I am not fit to die. Pray for me, Hal. Pray that I may be such a Christian as my mother was."

Since Warren Lewis finally decided to come home, a new spirit had taken possession of him. He had thought seriously of death and eternity, and thus his life assumed deeper significance.

Dr. Manson did not say he could restore him to health, neither did he discourage all hope. He did, however, recommend that business be so arranged, it could be settled by another, without sacrifice.

"It is always best to be prepared for the worst," he added, by way of softening the

blow he had given. "Perhaps your business is never at loose ends, Cousin Warren."

"I don't intend it shall be at loose ends," was the reply. "But there are some things I should prefer to settle myself. I have never made a will, and it is best that I should do so now. Every man ought to do it, when he is in full possession of his faculties."

The will was made with all due formalities. John Carr bade his friend farewell, and returned home. One day went by after another, while few beside Dr. Manson and his patient dreamed of the suffering endured in that luxuriously furnished chamber, where a naturally vigorous constitution combatted the weakness and disease induced by the use of intoxicating drinks. Bitterly did Warren Lewis repent of his sin and folly. Enduring physical pain, which was one prolonged agony, he was at the same time tormented with strange, frightful fancies. The hermit of

Holcombe was his constant companion, until, gradually, he ceased to be so much annoyed by the pale, care-worn face. This was a part of his punishment, as he said to his cousin, who sought to rid him of the haunting presence.

"The old man looks at me more kindly than he did. After all, I have done but little better than he. Strange we can't see where we are wrong, until too late. It is too late for me; isn't it, Hal?"

This question had been often upon his lips, yet remained unspoken, while friends hoped for his recovery.

Never, since he had looked into the eyes of her he had called wife, and told her she must die, had it been so hard for Dr. Manson to speak the words which precluded further hope. "I fear it is too late, Cousin Warren. I have done my best; but you should have come to me sooner."

"I know how it is, Hal. I have killed my-self. How long shall I probably live?"

"That I cannot tell. You may live for weeks, and you may be called suddenly."

"Oh, Hal, it is hard to die so," murmured the sick man, grasping the hand which was outstretched to him. "It is hard to leave my wife and children;" and the hot tears coursed down his cheeks. "God pity them, and care for them better than I have done. And father! How can he bear it? Will you tell him? Oh, if I had only pledged myself to abstinence, when we were at Holcombe, this would not have come upon me. Pray, now, that I may be prepared to die. You will be a friend to my boys, Hal. Don't leave me," he added, as his cousin turned from the bed. "Marion will come when you go, and she must not see me yet. Pray with me, Hal."

At such a time, the Christian comes to God,

with no formal petition. From the very depths of his heart, ascends the earnest cry for help; while the All Merciful, looking down compassionately, hears and answers. Dr. Manson remained upon his knees, until he felt that a blessing was given. Then, rising, he resumed his seat, and spoke of what most concerned his companion.

It was a sad day for all. The father was not surprised, when told that his son must soon die, although he had hoped otherwise. "I must bear it," he said, with quivering lips. "Help me, Harry. I shall depend upon you, and Warren must prepare to die. I think he has been different, since he came here," remarked the old man, looking wistfully into the face of his companion.

"He is different," was the reply. "I trust he will be prepared to go home in peace."

Marion Lewis thought she had schooled herself to bear whatever might come; but the

blow fell heavily. Small consolation was it that an ample support was secured to herself and children. She cared only that her husband should live. Forgotten were the years of disappointment and anxiety, when his presence had sometimes inspired her with fear; and as she expressed her grief, he learned how fond and true a heart he had wounded.

For what? That he might show his manly independence. That he might drain the glass with others, and enjoy the momentary exhilaration of a quickened pulse and stimulated brain. On the other hand, that he might be tortured with racking pain and weird fancies; and at last, bid adieu to the fair earth, while life's duties were but half accomplished. He saw it all now, and wondering at his perversity, asked God to forgive his great sin.

He consulted with his father, in regard to his children; desired above all things, that they should avoid the danger into which he had fallen. He wished Dr. Manson to be their guardian, yet deferred to his wife, and she, with a readiness which showed it had been before considered, assented to the arrangement.

Mr. Gregory had married not long after the death of his first wife, and with new claimants upon his love, might not give to Marion so much of sympathy and assistance as she would require. But here, in the home where her husband had spent most of his early days, there was room for all; and, as Grandfather Lewis said, a vacancy which no one else could fill.

So this was decided; and there remained only some business arrangements to be completed. From his sick bed, the merchant dictated various letters, and until three days before his death, interested himself in everything pertaining to the settlement of his estate.

We might linger over these last days, dur-

ing which the dying man exhibited a calmness in marked contrast to the agitation of those about him. I might describe the parting with loved ones, record the words of admonition spoken to his children, and paint the final death struggle.

But last days, sad partings, and death triumphs come alike to us all. It is not from these, but from the lives I have sketched, I would have my readers learn a lesson.

In a wretched cellar, where never a ray of sunlight penetrated the gloom, a beggar died, and there were none to mourn his loss.

A long cortege of mourners followed the body of Warren Lewis to its resting-place, where trees waved and flowers bloomed. There were many to honor his memory, and speak of his virtues. But so surely as the beggar had fallen a victim to intemperance, had this man signed his own death warrant,

when he refused to forego the use of intoxicating drinks. Was it well to do this? When, to live at one's best, insures true success, is it not worse than folly to barter all, for a mere caprice of appetite or fashion?

By the death of his son, Mr. John Lewis was once more placed at the head of a family, and well did he fulfill the trust he had assumed. Dr. Manson, the nominal guardian of his grandchildren, gave them counsel from time to time; but it was the mother's influence which, above all, molded their characters.

When the eldest was fifteen years of age, a sealed envelope was placed in his hand, as a legacy from his father. This contained a long letter; and if anything had been wanting to confirm him in habits of temperance and self-control, the words he read supplied this need.

There were four other sealed envelopes;

but only three of these were opened. The youngest child died before attaining the age of fifteen, and Dr. Manson, knowing the temptation to which he was peculiarly exposed, counted his death a blessing.

Mrs. Lewis lives to see her remaining sons among the noblest and best, serving God faithfully, and repaying her care and devotion. Their grandfather, too, having passed the allotted age of man, by nearly a score of years, rejoices in his boys, and half forgets there was another more nearly related to him.

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